



WE WALK AMONG BYZANTINE CROSSES IN
SAN VITALE CLOISTER, RAVENNA

See text, page 69

MY HOBBY OF The Cross

Stories of a Quest in Many Lands

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ILLUSTRATED



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To

J. LANE MILLER

*my husband and fellow-hobbyist, who takes
me to the far-away places where our crosses
are found, encourages me in their study, and
generously shares his own hobby for quest-
ing the beautiful, as seen in the photographs
which accompany this simple narrative*

A FOREWORD

THIS book does not aim to be a history of Christian iconography. That would be too dull to write or to read in our distracted age. It is the informal story of a personal collection made during more than one hundred thousand miles of recent travel to countries which through the centuries produced their own types of Christian symbol. It aims to paint in, the religious, cultural and human-interest backgrounds where we found these crosses. If some of your favorite designs are not included, remember that the collection is still growing. And that there is after all, a limit to what can be compressed within the covers of a book. If you are inspired by what is offered here as much as we have been by its assembling, our ambitious task will prove to have been even more pleasant than it has already.

We have made it our business to enrich and verify our material by tracing to its headwaters the rise of the cross as a Christian symbol. Repeatedly we have gone to the Catacombs at Rome—chief authority for the Early Christian period; to the Fourth Century churches of Palestine; to Ravenna, capital of Honorius and of Theodoric the Goth; and to trace the brilliant Byzantine to its lair in old Constantinople and Greece. And to reconstruct the glow radiated to sincere worshippers “in spirit and in truth” by the symbols to which they clung through life and then passed on to others.

That I, the wife of a Methodist clergyman, should have such a hobby is perhaps an anomaly.

“What! Does she know nothing about iconoclasm?” I can hear someone say. “Does she not know that there was a Protes-

tant Reformation four centuries ago? Has she gone Mediæval? Does she not know that we live in a new world of realism in religion and in art?"

And I almost hope that some will say, as they see "My Hobby of the Cross" displayed in book-shop windows, "What a title!" For this just gives me an opportunity to invite them to stand by until they have read the last two pages, where the title is amply justified.

To this I might add, that Jesus himself had a warm sympathy for the enthusiasm of all collectors. For one day he told his oriental neighbours a story which particularly delighted them. It was about a Palestine merchant who, in his search for goodly pearls, came across one so flawless in beauty that he actually sold "all that he had" in his little shop and bought it with the proceeds. Possibly this merchant of the Parable of the Kingdom was like the Jerusalem merchant from whom we have secured many of our crosses, a collector himself, as well as a dispenser of antiquities.

The dedication page of this book carries with it my profound gratitude to my fellow-hobbyist in the Parsonage-on-the-Park whose book this is, quite as much as it is mine. He has taken me to the queer places where we have found the crosses and has sponsored their purchase. He has had to endure me while I have been writing this book. And at every step of the task, has counselled and encouraged me to believe that it could be completed in the leisure at our disposal—we have been gathering its material for ten years in our "off the record" hours. To a host of other people our thanks go out for co-operation in all sorts of ways. To eminent scholars and archæologists who have shared as many crumbs from their feast of facts as we could consume. And to other folks as obscure as the pious peanut man from ancient Sparta who sells his savoury bags under our

study window to halting motorists or children on their way to the Park but lets the world go by when I suddenly appear clutching an old Greek cross, whose symbols I ask him to decipher. And in between the scholars and the peanut man are many people who do not realize how valuable a clue they have furnished by their fragments of information.

We wish to thank also Miss Mabel Brown for her information about the Nestorian cross; the charming Russian woman at the Schaffer Art Gallery for interpreting some obscure symbols on our Russian crosses; the bacteriologist in a metropolitan hospital for her data about "Radiolaria"; and the recent refugee from Germany who did a bit of research in Washington for us; and the friend who generously gave us the reference books we have used in our studies. And of course, very sincerely, we thank those who have entered into our enthusiasm for the "Hobby of the Cross" by giving choice specimens for our collection.

M. S. M.

Brooklyn, N. Y.

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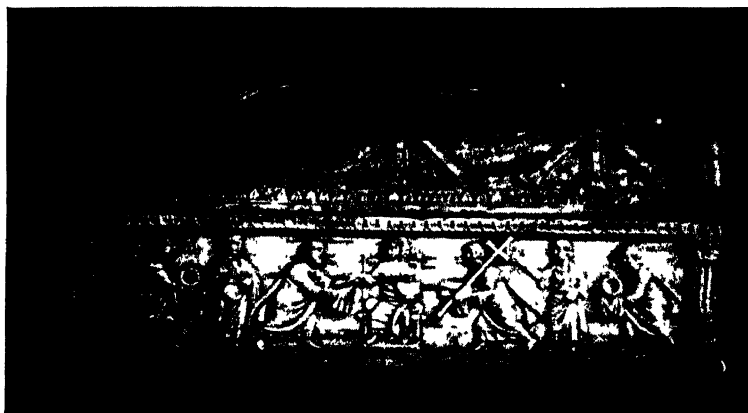
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PLATE ONE



CHRISTIAN SYMBOLS IN FIFTH CENTURY SARCOPHAGUS, RAVENNA

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THE "ICHTHUS" OR FISH

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SILVER AMULET OF ST. GEORGE
AND DRAGON, ATHENS

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Chapter One

THE HOBBY SUDDENLY BEGINS

HOBBIES! Everybody needs one. More persons have them, than we imagine. Still more, wish that they had. They yearn to be utterly possessed by some gripping voluntary interest putting edge on necessitous routine.

Yet a hobby cannot be deliberately gone after. You cannot, for example, walk along among the antique shops of Madison Avenue or Fifty-Seventh Street, Manhattan and keep going until you have found some line of interest which will ever after claim a large share of your leisure. You cannot find your hobby. Your hobby must find you. It must slip up on you unawares and grip its tentacles about your fancy without your realizing its approach. And by the time you have discovered its presence you cannot possibly extricate yourself.

A hobby seizes you as suddenly as influenza. Yet it is not communicable. I am as immune to our neighbours' flare for Georgian silver and Sandwich glass, old shaving cups and Roman coins as they are to mine for antique crosses of Christendom.

A hobby is the most individual of assets. It cannot be pursued after the manner of professional "collectors." It must be a byproduct of one's most intimate experiences; a legacy of human activities. Therefore, it gives a romantic glow to travel and to human contacts. At least, that is the way our hobby works.

Each accession becomes a dearly remembered incident set in a frame of travel.

The suddenness of our seizure ten years ago is proof of the genuineness of a hobby which has added incidental delight to more than one hundred thousand miles of journeying in which my husband and I have spent fascinating hours of search and of research in dark "sûks" of Syria and Egypt; "Torgsins" of Russia—while these lasted; pawn shops of bewildered Spain; musty bazaars and "copper streets" of old Istanbul; seaside silversmiths' in English Penzance; lapidaries' in Crusader Rhodes; colourful peasant shops in robust Balkan countries; and pushcarts along the muddy Arno in creative Florence.

And quite as delightful as the rewarding days when we have discovered historic specimens worthy of adding to our collection are the absolutely unproductive hours. We have walked through by-streets near the flower markets of old Nice, for example, until footsore, looking for a Lorraine cross of a certain type, then hired a horse and brougham whose "cocher" asked from door to door for "des croix antiques." In vain we plumbed the resources of this historic Riviera city—only to have the very Lorraine cross we sought, make its way into our own home years later on Christmas in the hands of a friend.

It is strange, how many persons have said to me recently, "I wish I had a hobby. Something which would challenge and exact something from me." One friend exclaimed poignantly, "I feel so unnecessary in the world. I am saturated with the satisfaction of my own needs. *I wish I really wanted something very badly.* I am fed up on clubs. I yearn to be possessed by something perfectly tremendous. I wish something would come along to claim my time and money! Something that would challenge me to study."

Here was a person in quest of a hobby. Her name is legion.

Turning to me suddenly, she demanded, "Do you have a hobby?"

"Yes," I answered, all aglow. "Iconography."

And, like every rider of a hobby horse, I leaped to the chance of galloping away, far into my favourite theme. Every hobbyist does. If you have delved in those Mediæval English Calendars of the Months which depict the exuberance of bearded noblemen riding to the June jousting-tournament on their brocade-caparisoned hobby-horses, you have caught the mood of the original hobby-horseman.

Have you ever read up on the hobbies of famous men? All have them. John Masefield, poet laureate of England, forgets his characteristic shyness when asked to discuss his penchant for carving ships' models for his friends. Thomas Hardy prized highly the one made for him by the author of "Salt Sea Ballads." When Dr. Einstein walked down the gang-plank as a refugee from Germany, he carried in his hand a violin case containing a precious instrument from which he draws harmonies of heavenly mathematics. So, too, Benito Mussolini turns to the violin after strenuous days in the Palazzo Venezia. He reconstructs himself by fiddling, not "while Rome burns" as Nero did, but while Rome builds herself into greater Augustan glories day by day. Lord Penrith, once ambassador to the United States, adopted book-binding as his cult. David Belasco specialized in Russian jewellery, a specimen of which is found in our collection in the form of an enamelled filigree cross.

The late Mustapha Kemal is said to have owned 11,000 pairs of cuff-links—although he himself, probably, would have said that his chief hobby was the education of promising Turkish children. Charles P. Steinmetz, the electrical wizard of Schenectady, had a bachelor's passion for garden flowers. Ethel

Barrymore, whom we associate with the drama, turns to her piano in hours of rebuilding her personality. So, too, does Fritz Kreisler, who is usually linked in everyone's thinking with his violin. The Right Honourable Winston Churchill, twice Britain's wartime First Lord of the Admiralty, turns some of his hobby hours into construction of small brick buildings on his English estate at Chartwell, remembering that he was once a member of a bricklayers' union. His flare for writing effective prose has enriched the world. The late Lawrence of Arabia who began his enigmatic career as an archæologist in the Near East with a zest for visiting every Crusader Castle of Syria and Palestine, constructed in his quiet later years in England a cottage guest-chamber which he whimsically called "The Admiral's Bedroom." Its bed was in the form of a bunk; its window, a porthole, against which by an odd device artificial spray was hurled at unwary guests.

Herbert Hoover talks fluently of Mediæval mining-prints—his personal book-plate reproduces a quaint scene of two men extracting ore from an ancient hill. Franklin D. Roosevelt has a front seat among stamp collectors, of whom no adequate census has ever been made. King Farouk of Egypt inherited his father's famous philatelic collection. At one world-congress recently ten million fans were reported as buying from ten thousand dealers. Several collections were valued at from one to three million dollars each. Everything from music to numismatics, cancelled mortgages, cowbells, snuff boxes, pewter feeding spoons, historic quilts, pairs of wedding dolls, scent bottles, air-mail postmarks, wooden chests, shawls, is precious in someone's eyes. I know a woman who is so enslaved by miniature elephants that she has had to build an addition to her California home to accommodate her fourteen hundred specimens. Another friend has added a new room lined with shelves for

her collection of pitchers. One of the finest private collections of English lustre china is in the charming "Home Sweet Home," birthplace of John Howard Payne at East Hampton, Long Island. Its platinum lustre pieces are particularly choice.

All museums reflect individuals' hobby-interests. The Morgan Wing at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, with its rare Coptic textiles and Limoges crucifixes; the H. J. Heinz collection of jade and ivories; the Frick Collection of Art on Fifth Avenue; the sixty-five million dollar gift of Andrew W. Mellon to establish a National Gallery of Art in Washington and the gift to this Gallery by Mr. Samuel P. Kress of a twenty-five million dollar collection of paintings; the Chinese porcelain room in the Seraglio Palace of the old Turkish Sultans in Istanbul—all these belong to the world of beauty-lovers because certain individuals rode their hobbies.

One of the chief treasures in the Museo Nazionale in Naples is due to the Farnese family's interest in marble sculptures and jewels. To their hobby we owe the presence of the Farnese Bull, largest known piece from ancient times, and the noble Hercules from the Baths of Caracalla. So, too, came to this same Museum the Borgian group of Egyptian art gems and the Arezzi tapestries. The most valuable wing of the National Museum in Cairo, guarded behind barred doors, is there because the Earl of Carnarvon's hobby for Egyptology led him and the late Howard Carter to extract from the Valley of the Kings, the eighteenth-dynasty golden splendour of eighteen-year old Tutenkhamon after it had been buried for 3200 years, one of the most dramatic finds in the history of archæology.

Mr. John D. Rockefeller's interest in the ancient past is reflected in the magnificent new Palestine Archæological Museum in Jerusalem, on the site of the camp of the noble Crusader Godfrey de Bouillon. So, too a flare for investigating

crumbling pre-Christian potsherds has led the British bicycle manufacturer and Bible enthusiast, Sir Charles Marston, to promote the Jericho and Lachish Expeditions.

Yes, museum-givers have dedicated their hobby-riding to the stimulus of posterity who are willing to turn their increased leisure into something more than lethargy.

And who can guess from what personal boredoms the riding of their hobby-horses snatched the givers? No one need be unhappy if he has health and enough means to get on from day to day, provided he is gripped by some absorbing interest. President Conant of Harvard urges young undergraduates to get ready for their "retirement" by extracurricular hobby studies pursued just for their own cultural sake—"triumphs of the mind," which may be continued through life in moments "snatched from busy careers."

Eminent psychiatrists prescribe "doing things with the hands" for those who toil with their brains. Professional people need hobbies that call for rolling up their sleeves. There is a satisfaction in being able to finger the results of expended effort.

A New York specialist in nervous diseases himself spends several weeks each year in an East Side cabinet shop saving his own sanity by creating things he can see. He comes back to his office ready to prescribe to estranged husbands and wives, tandem rides together on some hobby-horse—the making or the collecting of tangible enrichments for their homes. And what is more important, enrichment for their personalities. Many husbands and wives collaborate in writing travel books; or pore over laboratory test tubes together as did Marie and Pierre Curie; or conduct classes for delinquent youth from city streets, in their "off the record" hours. Mr. and Mrs. Henry Ford gather rare china from all over the world. A "Western Union"

official and his wife have a hobby-room devoted to fossils, shells, meteor fragments, "geods" (crystals containing chambers of water sealed up by nature millenniums ago) and minerals radiating eerie lights.

In an elegant apartment on Riverside Drive overlooking the Hudson there lives a young married couple, representative of the real New York. How superficially is New York known to visitors who whirr by on buses! Noticing one day in the tastily furnished living-room of this young couple a number of chairs finely upholstered with unusual pieces of needlepoint tapestry, I commented on them.

"Yes," said the wife. "My husband and I—though he does not like me to tell of his part in them—have worked these together. I was very ill after the birth of my son. We could not go out evenings. And so we have turned our leisure into creating these articles for our home. We have done research into rare designs and are so happy here in our quiet nook along the Hudson, enjoying each other and our wonderful boy."

However, this joint "ride" is rare. Hobbies, as we have already said, are the most individual of assets. Mother, dad, sister and "Junior" all hitch their own horses in the family stalls.

But what of *our* hobby?

Why is it that every time we enter a strange corner of the world one of our first errands is to hunt the obscure little junk shops where our particular treasure may be lying, waiting our arrival? May indeed, have been waiting for us for centuries?

I had not the faintest notion of becoming such a hobbyist when the seizure came. We were sauntering one morning on the windy little Acropolis at Athens, that exquisitely satisfying hilltop of history, marvelling at the nonchalant charm of the Caryatides still carrying their heavy load of architrave with jaunty grace after twenty-five centuries. The archæologist who

was accompanying us saw my husband, or Lane, as you shall know him in the pages which follow, pick up from the cluttered ground a fragment of snowy Pentellic marble fallen from a chisel during a current restoration of the Parthenon.

"If you like eloquent Greek fragments," he suggested, "why don't you go in for buying a little antique vase or two? I know a reeking old bazaar where such things are found."

It's too easy to be duped in the matter of ancient potsherds," Lane replied. "Dealers make vases one day, crack them up with a hammer the next, and on the third, put them together so cleverly that they sell for authentic antiquities."

"If you will trust to my judgment," laughed the professor, "I will lead you to a reliable shop. Few travellers stumble upon it. It is just off 'Shoe Lane,' down near St. Irene's."

So, without dreaming that we were on the eve of being discovered by a hobby, we pattered after the professor, picking our way down the steep Propylaea steps from the Acropolis, along the Boulevard of St. Paul, on past the Theatre of Dionysos, birthplace of the classic drama. Shades of Sophocles beckoned us to come sit in the round-backed marble chairs which were reserved for Athenian senators in the days when twenty thousand spectators jammed the seats and surrounding hill-sides for performances of "Electra" and "Agamemnon." But we were bent for the bazaars. In fact we speeded up the process by hailing a shining new taxi—of all things, modern, beautiful Athens is most modern in her honking taxis. We headed for Pandrossou Street near "Shoe Lane."

If you have ever felt the spell of an eastern bazaar, whether in the silver market of Damascus, or the perfume stalls of Cairo's cobwebbed Khân el-Kalîli, you need be beckoned only once. Their sights and their smells enthrall. You are ashamed of their ancient disreputabilities and ragged shabby hangers-on.

Yet you delight in the Arabian Nights' flavour of the exotic experience. Nothing in our standardized western world of nervous, hasty shopping compares. East of Athens, the act of buying is an adventure every time. It is something not to be entered into with indecent speed. The amber and jewellery stalls of musty old Istanbul's roofed-over bazaars are housed in crumbling palaces and mosques adjacent to odorous caravanseries where pierced brass camel lanterns and woven saddle bags are redolent of the ancient East, which is too-rapidly passing before the on-rush of motor traffic.

I cannot describe, I cannot explain
The thrill I get from a camel train.
A camel train with burdens and bumps
And beads and bells and laden humps,
As it comes from the markets of old Baghdad
With silks and rugs I should like to have had.
A camel train, by a donkey led,
A camel train with its tassels of red,
A camel train on thistles fed,
Yet stalking along with a regal tread! *

And the brilliant silk stalls of Arab Jerusalem and the sticky cocoanut sweetmeat shops on stepped David Street! Who can forget these? Or the rug markets of Cairo, where mellow old Kermanshahs and leafy Tabriz and Ghiordes prayer carpets worn thin by Mecca-facing Moslems are carried out into dark alleys by desperate merchants, shouting bargain prices and enticing your interest with proffered glasses of amber tea or cups of sweet, bitter coffee, pleading for a chance to "shake hands and strike a Turkish bargain"—after which no proper Moslem would think of running up the price! Alas that Khân el-Kalîli

* From "Footprints in Palestine" by Madeleine S. Miller, published by the Fleming H. Revell Company.

and the vine-clad Libyan silversmiths' bazaars are being modernized and crammed with bolts of western yard goods.

The Athens bazaar to which our archæologist friend was leading us is at the head of Pandrossou Street which intersects Aeolus Street, leading appropriately north from the octagonal First Century Tower of the Winds with its noted water-clock. Turning a sudden corner we left the rows of conventional stores filled with shoes and found ourselves in a paved alley of small antique shops—some half dozen of them—each well worth lingering in. Especially since their owners appear to have all the time in the world to answer questions about the history of their wares. The two men examined slender clay vases like those which built up the prosperity as well as the art-reputation of Athens in the Fifth Century before Christ—amphoræ used as prizes in Athenian games, black and red Corinthian primitives, and Fifth Century "hydria" with figures left in the natural red clay and their backgrounds painted in black. Just as Lane was closing a deal for an eight-inch, graceful Tanagra rose-red vase decorated with black horses and helmeted warriors of 2500 years ago, my eye lighted on a tray of jumbled jewellery. Most of it was sheer dusty junk to us—but how precious to some other collectors on other hobbies bent. We would tell them of Mr. Adams' shop, we thought, benevolently. Collectors are generous about others' foibles.

All of a sudden I was attracted to a cross of faded gold filigree, studded with cabouchons of red and blue stones, suggesting the taste of Byzantine Christians in Justinian's Sixth Century Constantinople. It could have belonged only to an Eastern Christian gentlewoman of delicate refinement. As a matter of fact, it came from the island of Crete, home of prehistoric art in the palace at Cnossus two thousand years before the Christian Era. This cross in Pandrossou Street dated only

two hundred years back yet the ancient elegance of Crete was in its design. From both arms hung tiny pendant crosses of pierced gold. Above its head was a filigree canopy topped with a crown of petals, as of a passion flower. This Cretan cross pleaded with me to take it up and possess it. Beauty, eloquent symbolic meaning shone from its chaste design.

"We'll have this," announced my indulgent husband to the antiquarian, at my first entreaty of desire.

Fortunately, Mr. Adams was an honest man—as we have found on subsequent visits to his shop. And he gladly exchanged the Cretan cross for three crisp American paper dollar bills.

Having gotten on so well with this pioneer member of what has proved to be a sizeable collection, I made bold to manifest interest in a still older cross—crudely scratched on a square silver amulet lying beside the Cretan cross in its dusty velvet tray. Its crooked edges and hand-rubbed silver worn into holes in places, spoke of intimate, reverent craftsmanship. On one side was embossed a square Greek cross and on the reverse, a stunning St. George on his horse, attacking the traditional Mediterranean dragon who so tortured guileless maidens.

In many a nook of the Middle East we were to meet this popular hero, from the Church of the Schiavoni in Venice, with its St. George murals by Carpaccio, to the Lebanese capital at Beirut, whose modern "Hotel St. George" emblazons on its baggage labels, reminders that St. George's knightly exploits are associated with the Bay of Beirut.

Stories of St. George and the virtuous princess whom he rescued from the fiery dragon spread early throughout the Middle East springing possibly from the tale of the Iranian deity, Verethragna. The Byzantine culture of the Seventh and Eighth centuries took the legends over. Of course they were "Chris-

tianized" and embellished by the Crusaders on their eastern campaigns of "pious" warfare. Some iconographers see the evangelization of Cappadocia symbolized by the rescue of the princess and the slaying of the evil dragon. Cyprus became rich in lore of St. George, whose festival is celebrated on April 23, when the sick are brought out to be cured. At the time of the new moon, children late in walking are carried to the Monastery of St. George at Larnaca, Cyprus. And in other parts of the island, girls late in finding husbands are promised hope if they knock at the door of St. George's Church, saying, "So may the bridegroom knock at our home."

Of course, Lane, my indulgent sponsor, added the St. George amulet from Mr. Adams' Athens shop. I never have had a desire to wear this pendant, on its heavy chain, because it savours too much of those worn by the Bedouin women of Beersheba Desert—amulets, which, by the way, are so interesting that one of our Jerusalem friends is making a hobby-collection of these and their lore. I content myself with fingering the smooth old silver box and its sacred cross of Christ, wondering what reverent craftsman in what silver-foamed Ægean island fashioned it, and when and for whom.

One evening a year or so later, we were looking through our cabinet of crosses in the Parsonage living room. Examining again the old St. George amulet with its square Greek cross—for often new details flash out at us unexpectedly after we have owned the specimens for some time—we drew out the slim little slide which is lid to this venerable box. The light from our lamp so fell that it disclosed contents. Eagerly we took a pin and began to prick out what was within. Soon we dislodged a tiny fragment of disintegrating cloth, a morsel of worm-eaten wood, and a segment of old coin.

Evidently some credulous Greek peasant thought these to

be holy relics, and for them exchanged aprons or skirts heavily-laden with colourful hand-embroidery which had required months of her winter work. The itinerant pedlar had foisted upon this honest woman what she thought to be a bit of the seamless robe of her Lord, a portion of his Calvary cross, and a slice of one of the coins for which his erstwhile friend Judas had sold him!

But this was going too far for our Methodist Parsonage hobby collection! Quickly we laid the holy frauds aside. The empty amulet was more precious to us without them. The husk, more desirable in this instance than the kernel.

I referred to this "find" in a lecture ten years later in an Episcopal Church in the Hudson Valley. At its close I was greeted by a young man wearing the rough brown robes of a vicar of that parish.

"Mrs. Miller," he said, "I am Brother Egidio. I have a cross here which I wish to present to your collection."

Handing me an unusual one which is described in Chapter Eleven, he continued, as he gazed at the square silver amulet, "My hobby is relics. I have a number of reputed saints' bones and stones from many an historic parish."

When I failed to tumble to what was in his mind, he at last nerved himself to ask, "What did you do with those things you found inside this silver Greek amulet?"

"Oh, they are in the secretary-desk of our living room, I believe, where we put them the night we found them. They are without value to us."

"Would you mind mailing them to me?" he asked.

Of course we agreed. And oddly enough, when removing them from their yellow envelope to pack them, we were amazed to see with them something which neither Lane nor I remember ever having noticed before. It was a fragment of

mother-of-pearl from a crucifix so old, that the un-crossed feet of the Saviour indicated a Byzantine origin of design.

Such is the mystery of the cross. The more we give away the more we possess. "He that spendeth, saveth."

But the whole incident of Brother Egidio's search for "relics" was discounted when, a few weeks after receiving the contents of the silver box, he wrote, "Would you mind sending me a signed statement to the effect that you believe these to be a fragment of the robe of Christ, part of Judas' silver and a portion of the true cross? I need this for my catalogue."

Imagine! Brother Egidio's hobby horse had carried his good sense clear out of bounds—and him, with it!

Beware, hobby-rider, the perils of your ride. Iconoclasts may "get you if you don't look out." As for us, we regard our collection as no fetishes of a discredited sacerdotalism, but as opportunities to study seekers' expressions of faith through the centuries, helps by which they became able to endure the cross set before them, in the hope of ultimately sitting down "at the right hand of the throne of God." These symbols are but scattered tesserae in the mosaic of the great Reality.

"When I survey the wondrous cross,
On which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride."

"Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all."

(Isaac Watts.)

Chapter Two

THE ALPHABET OF CHRISTIAN ICONOGRAPHY

ONE Easter, Lane brought me a gift more unique than the usual gay corsage or immaculate doeskin gloves or new books which mark such occasions in happy families. It was a handful of tarnished silver, upon untangling which I found a true Palestinian "Ichthus," some two hundred years old. Its origin was in Jerusalem, as was the hand-wrought silver chain whose links were in the form of fish scales, appropriately enough.

"But what is an 'Ichthus'?" you ask.

It is the sacred fish, whose name in Greek, "Ichthus," is formed by the first letters of the words, "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour."

The "Ichthus," probably first used at Alexandria, Egypt, in the Second Century is one of several Early Christian symbols whose use antedated the cross in many a nook of the Mediterranean world which cradled Christianity. An "Ichthus" was discovered in the fourth century floor mosaics excavated in 1934 under the nave of the Bethlehem Basilica of the Nativity, erected in the reign of Constantine the Great. Through those heroic three centuries when believers in the Way were being martyred for their faith, as they were in Nazi Germany, symbolic emblems were worn on finger rings, brooches, or painted on the walls of the Catacombs in Rome and other centres where Christians came to bury their dead and to worship.

After the conversion of the Emperor Constantine the Great in 313 A.D. the cross became more common. But before his proclamation of religious freedom at Milan, iconography—which has been defined as “the expression in art of an idea, a person or an event”—employed subtler forms of symbolism. Oddly enough, the old word, icon, has in the twentieth century been woven into the new language of science, incorporated in “iconoscope,” which is a tube used in the television process to pick up image impressions and transform them into electric current.

Before completing the manuscript of this book we made another visit to Rome to study again these symbols which became the alphabet of iconography throughout the Early Christian and Byzantine worlds. The Catacombs are our primary source of Christian symbolism. There along the grass-blown Old Appian Way followed by Paul as he came from the port of Puteoli we halted on the outskirts of the capital but within view of St. Peter’s dome. Near a grove of eucalyptus and cypresses we went down to the series of narrow underground passages and chapels winding in a labyrinth of low red brick walls, once marble and mosaic trimmed, where the first western Christians buried their dead, perhaps on a plot given them by patricians adjacent to their own family vaults. During the time of persecutions intensified by Diocletian the cult of martyrs became so popular that Christian burial vaults became underground chapels, seating sixty persons and arranged with higher seats for clergy and a tomb adapted for an altar.

There we saw by flickering tapers that dripped all over our notebook—and by Lane’s more efficient flashlight—“graffiti” or frescoes on stucco walls and ceilings as in First Century Pompeian pagan villas, giving the whole alphabet of Christian symbolism. The “Ichthus” of course we saw time and again. In the Second Century Crypt of Lucina, oldest part of this Catacomb,

it is most interestingly placed under a basket of small loaves and a glass of wine. This "Eucharistic Fish" says that underneath the visible loaves and wine is actually the Ichthus, Jesus Christ, Son of God and Saviour. Another favourite symbol seen in this same cubicle of Lucina, is the Good Shepherd, showing a very young Jesus in the guise of a beardless Roman youth carrying across his shoulder the lost sheep he had gone to seek and carrying a pail of milk in his hand to denote the Eucharist. Again the Shepherd appears surrounded by a flock of sheep, the faithful Apostles. When palms occur they denote victory or the fields of Paradise. Another popular symbol we found the "Orans" or person standing in prayer with arms extended, typifying the martyr or the Church itself. The ship, also, indicated the Church, transporting the faithful to the home harbour. In the mast of the ship with its crossyards, Christians saw concealed a tall slender cross, looming over all. Have you not yourself sometimes thought of a cross, when watching the yards of a plunging vessel sway back and forth in the dark across some starry sky?

The olive branch denoted peace; the dove, the spirit; the anchor, hope; the peacock with its renewal of feathers, immortality; the stag, the Christian's longing for quiet meditation.

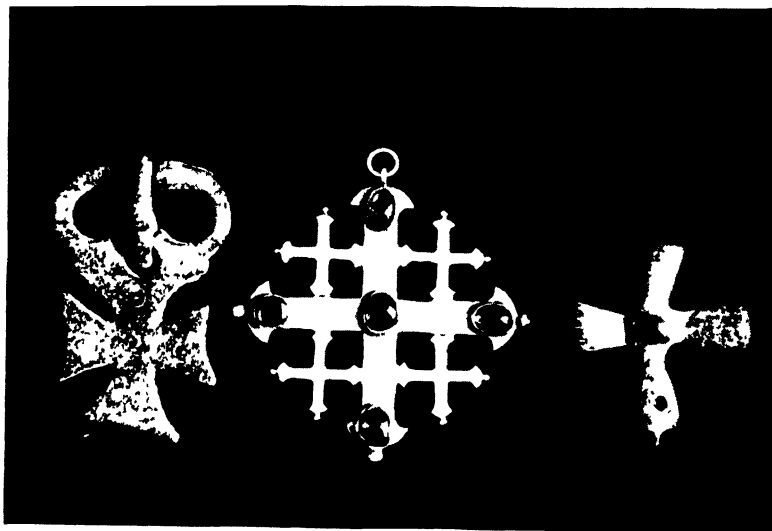
One of the most interesting symbols we found to be the "Chi Rho" or sacred monogram affixed by Constantine the Great to his "labarum" or standard, after he had seen in the heavens during his difficult campaigns of 312 A.D., a radiant cross, whose sign he adopted, determining that by its power, he would conquer. Formed by the letter X intersected by our letter P, it is based on the first two letters of the Greek word meaning "Christ the Anointed." It was carried by the bold legions of Constantine into the little city of Byzantium when the Emperor in 326 A.D. by a stroke of genius chose this fair site along the

Golden Horn to become New Rome, capital of a unified Empire as far removed from the pagan politics of the western Rome as the Ankara of Kemal Atatürk in later centuries was removed from the Constantinopolitan intrigues of Abdul Hamid and his demagogues. When we see the Chi Rho we are reminded that when Constantine adopted the sign of the cross he took unto himself another secret of the Early Christians' power—the spirit of unity among those who had shared and survived a common persecution. His unified Mediterranean empire is a tribute to that power.

Walking one day along the River Arno in Florence in the shadow of the Ponte Vecchio with its array of silversmiths' shops around Cellini's bust, we came upon an old pushcart of sundry trifles—jaundiced books, junky jewels, broken pottery. And in their midst, unwanted by most hobby-riders, a small brass lamp having for its handle a "Chi Rho." For a "lira" or two we carried it off proudly to join our collection of the early symbols of Christ.

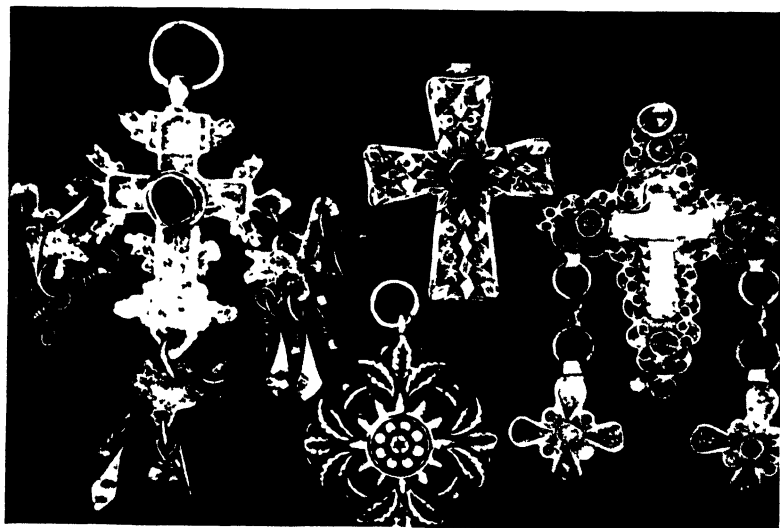
Up until thirty years ago it was generally supposed that prior to the Fifth Century the Greek and Latin crosses were practically never used. But in 1902 a scholar named Wilpert published a description of crosses in Catacomb paintings, of which at least eight are attributable to the first four centuries. One of these particularly we recall seeing frescoed on the ceiling of a Catacomb chapel—a square cross.

The portrayal of Jesus himself came into use very early in the history of Christian art—a very vital, wide-awake Christos, short-haired, as was the mode in Græco-Roman times, and beardless. By the first half of the Third Century, the short-bearded Christ appeared, with wide-open eyes and gentle expression, as we saw in a Catacomb chapel. And by the Fourth, a fully-bearded one. The regal aspects of the Christ Trium-



CROSSES FROM THE LAND OF THE CROSS THREE CRUSADER
CROSSES

See text, pages 42 and 48



PALISTINIAN CROSSES JERICHO, BETHLEHEM, COPTIC

See text, pages 51-54

phant, we shall discuss in Chapter Five, in connection with Byzantine Crosses. The variety of Christs we saw portrayed in the Catacombs convinced us that the early painters had no authentic portrait of Jesus.

The crucifix did not develop early in the course of symbolism because many of the first converts were Jewish—"even of the rulers many believed on him." To the Jews, portrayal of the Saviour by a human figure savoured too much of the idolatry against which they had been schooled by Moses. Mesopotamia, however, has yielded a painting depicting the Lord on his cross, wearing a long sleeveless, purple tunic, dating from about 586. The forms in which the garments of Christ were portrayed offers a study in itself.

By the end of the Seventh Century the crucifix had become more wide-spread in use. But up until the Eleventh Century, Christ upon his cross remained the living, triumphant Saviour we see to-day in the newly uncovered, gleaming mosaics of Sancta Sophia in Istanbul. On the earliest crucifixes the figure of Jesus was outlined. Later it was painted on a wooden cross. Still later, embossed or superimposed in metal on wood. Not until the Ninth Century, in the time of Leo III, did a bas-relief of Jesus on the cross appear. The depiction of our Lord upon a cruciform panel is essentially Italian, though often considered Byzantine. It belongs to the pious art of Mediæval Italy, to that century which gave the world its Francis of Assisi.

While gazing upon a "Byzantine Type" of crucifix used as a reredos in the rustic Chapel of San Damiano on the outskirts of the lovely hill town of Assisi one spring day in the year 1206, the sudden call came to this young son of a rich Italian silk merchant to give all his strength, his ability, and consecrated enthusiasm, to serving the One whose eyes seemed to meet his own gaze as he prayed in the quiet of the tumbled-

down shrine among the old grey olives of the quiet Umbrian Valley, ploughed by its patient white oxen. We, too, have prayed in that enchanting Chapel of San Damiano and can understand its spell cast upon both Francis and Clara, whose order of worshipful, diligent women he there established.

Young Francis saw in the Twelfth Century crucifix of Albert Spezio not the bleeding wounds of a dying Saviour, but the living challenge of a wide-eyed, vital Companion, challenging him to enlist in a life of endless service, poor in all things save joy and love. At that moment the soul of St. Francis took on its own "stigmata," its identification with the Christ to whom the searching youth had been praying in the secluded chapel. Immediately he began to rebuild the prayer-place with his own hands, as a labour of love. In later years the famous cruciform panel which had transformed his life was transferred to the Church of Santa Chiara in Assisi, where to-day the devout "Poor Claras" draw back their curtains to show this treasure to visitors who come with devout curiosity to their ancient church, propped up by buttresses resting on the ground.

Not until the close of the Eleventh Century was Christ-crucified shown widely on sacramental crosses. Then the Saviour appeared triumphant, head upright, body erect. But with the beginning of the Thirteenth Century, a more realistic treatment came into vogue, showing the drooping head, the tortured body of a dying Saviour.

Where may we look for the earliest evidences of the cross in art? A form so simple as this, made by the intersection of two straight lines, inevitably suggested itself to the first men who decorated their caves and their coins, or wove designs into their hand-loomed rugs and textiles for their garments. So eminent an authority as James H. Breasted, in his "Ancient Times," called attention to a small stone seal on which ancient Baby-

Ionians had carved a picture of two oxen, drawing a "seeder" which ploughed deep furrows into which grain was dropped from a funnel attached to the "seeder" and kept filled by a man walking along carrying a grain bag. Above this well-executed depiction of a clever agricultural implement is carved a distinct square cross with a smaller equal-armed cross inside it. What its symbolism was we cannot guess. We have seen the duplicate of this simple square cross many times in Asia Minor.

Similarly, a Greek coin from Thebes of about 700-500 B.C. bears a perfect Maltese cross at whose centre is a square cross circled with the wheel of eternity—an archaic form of "theta," the first Greek letter of the word, "Thebes." American Indians used the cross frequently in their woven baskets. So, too, every primitive people employed this emblem.

The cross was early employed outside Palestine, in symbolic representations of the new-born faith. In the First Century Syria had large communities of Greek Christians. Edessa, which during the Twelfth Century Crusades was a chief principality of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, was a missionary centre as early as the Second Century. That same era saw many converts in Spain and Persia. Lyons, France, had her own Greek bishop as early as 177 A.D. In Egypt, Coptic Christians were establishing thriving centres of worship in the first and Second Centuries and were sending out missionaries to found Abyssinian churches. Powerful Gothic warriors in Europe who had met Christianity during their raids had been converted prior to 325 A.D. Italy had many Believers before Paul landed at Puteoli. Britain had Christians in the Third Century, during the Roman occupation, as we have seen in the little Church of St. Martin at Canterbury.

Ever since that tragic hour on Good Friday when the Saviour of the World hung upon Calvary the nations have worked

out their own types of cross in memory of that sacred event. Many have built into their cross, local materials and tastes.

No one can estimate the total number of varieties of cross in the world to-day, so universal has it become. Are there five hundred? Or many more?

At any rate, all of them are derived from five basic forms. There is first of all the T-shaped or "Tau" cross, also called the pre-Christian or Anticipatory cross, because, with a loop added to the top to form a handle, it was identical with the Egyptian "ankh" or key of life seen in the hieroglyphics of ancient obelisks at Heliopolis, or in the Istanbul Hippodrome, or on London's Thames Embankment and in Central Park, New York.

The second fundamental type is the Latin or Roman cross, with its upright longer than the transverse arm. This variety is usually associated with western Christendom centring in the capital of the Roman Catholic Church. Yet even when Byzantine or Eastern Christianity prospered most—from the Fourth Century of Constantine the Great through the Sixth Century of Emperor Justinian, builder of Sancta Sophia—the Latin cross also was used.

The third fundamental type is the square Greek cross, equal-limbed and looking very much like the "plus sign" which the cross truly is, adding to and enriching those who acknowledge it. This is associated with eastern Christendom. Beauty-loving Hellenistic artists recoiled from the cruelty of the literal Latin cross and preferred to indicate the sacrifice by a square cross decorated with conventionalized designs rather than by an agonizing, crucified figure. It is hard to overestimate the influence of Hellenistic Christians, whether in Trans-Jordan at many-columned Jerash, where we see ruins of churches which were "altered" from pagan temples in the Fourth Century; or, in realistic Syria, the Balkans, or even in Rome itself at this

late day, when Pope Pius XII wore a square cross emblazoned on his coronation robes.

The first Roman Christians were chiefly Greeks and as late as the end of the Second Century Greek was the official language of the Roman Church. The roster of the Bishops of Rome at this same period includes few Latin names. It was not until the Third Century that the organization of the Church became outstandingly Latin even though services had been conducted for the Roman-born in their own tongue before then.

The fourth of the five fundamental types of cross is the X-shaped cross of St. Andrew, so named because the fisherman of Galilee is said to have been crucified head downwards on a cross of this sort. It is also known as the saltire cross and is used frequently in heraldic designs. It appeared on the shield of Scotland as early as the Fourth Century, even as the square cross has been incorporated into the British flag since the time of Edward III or before.

The fifth basic variety of cross is a hooked cross, or swastika, known also as the fylfot. There are two types, one with the hooks turning clockwise, the other, in the opposite direction. This design has been universally used for so long that no one dares date it. Aboriginies as widely scattered as India and North America have incorporated it into their art.

In our hobby collection there are specimens of all five of these types. We shall describe them in the pages which follow. The world is enriched by many superb crosses which have come down from the ages when men and women were pouring their devotion into the shaping of exquisitely proportioned crosses far lovelier than any which are being made to-day. Where may we see these?

One of the most captivating collections is the Early Christian and Byzantine section of the Department of British and

Mediæval Antiquities in the British Museum, London. Better than any other group, the objects here displayed help us understand how early Christianity made its way into many lands and gave rise to art as varied as were the skills and tastes of the various cultures and tastes it encountered and vitalized.

Time and again we have been inspired by poring over the cases displaying Coptic linen tunics with impressive purple crosses woven into their texture; or a silver basin from Cyprus, having a nielloed Byzantine cross at its centre, and a head of a popular Syrian martyr upholding its graceful proportions. One would recognize this cross as emanating from Constantinople, no matter where he met it. There, too, we see cross-trimmed silver spoons used in feeding the poor; toilet articles of Proiecta "the wife of Secundus," whose wedding jewel casket bears an inscription telling of her faith in the living Christ; pilgrim flasks, "Ampillæ," inscribed with the cross; bronze lamps having sacred birds for handles; the famous gilt bronze cross from Abyssinia in the same shape as our own, described in Chapter Three. Probably the most humanly interesting objects in this wonderful Museum Wing are the Roman plates recovered from a ship sunk in the Thames, bearing the stamp of the cross upon them; and the finger rings of gold and silver, with seals and intaglios of precious stones, bearing tender inscriptions, such as "Accept this present, O sweet One, and may it be yours for many a year"—probably a betrothal gift; and "Arborius, mayest thou live long in Christ." Two gold wedding rings, one from the Fifth Century, one from the Tenth Century, are ornamented with the cross and scenes from the life of Christ which make the observer realize how much a part of life was the Christian faith in those glowing centuries so often set down as "dark."

The Morgan Wing of the Metropolitan Museum in New

York offers a notable collection of Coptic and Fourteenth Century French enamelled crucifixes. Who can forget the Thirteenth Century Limoges cross of metal and enamel, depicting the body of Christ in white enamel draped in deep blue, and hanging on a green tree-like cross, mounting above the skull (symbolizing death and sin) and having above his head the Greek inscription, "IHS-XPS"? The Syrian gold necklace and crosses from the Sixth Century, and the gold necklace from the Third Century, with pearl and sapphire pendants similar in shape to our own Coptic cross are deeply impressive. So, also the Spanish book-cover made for Queen Felicia of Aragon about 1083 and ornamented with a cross surrounded by vines, studded with cabouchons of very ancient stones. These and the Fourteenth Century square Slavic cross bearing at its centre Christ rising from a chalice, with the archangels Gabriel and Michael at top and bottom, and two six-winged seraphim beholding—these treasures hidden behind Museum walls in the midst of Manhattan's traffic carry one far back into the centuries when art and religion went hand in hand.

Nowhere in the world may you see such superb crosses worked into metal book-covers as in the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York. A special exhibit for six months during the World's Fair placed before the public some of the priceless treasures of this hobbyist whose flare for books has safeguarded matchless manuscripts.

A certain "Gold and Jewel Cover" of French work from the Ninth Century is ranked the "most finished specimen of Carolingian goldsmiths' work in existence." Embossed on that cover is a superb Jesus on his cross, mourned by two holy women and his mother, with the sun, moon and four angels beholding. The type of Christ portrayed is the living Byzantine one, his feet not crossed and nailed, but spread apart. He

wears the loin cloth, not the tunic, His head is not drooping in despair, but uplifted, beholding the needs of those about him, His hands uplifted, with two fingers extended in the eastern form of benediction.

This same Morgan collection reveals rich iconographical details in the Twelfth Century French work of silver and enamel; German Fourteenth Century book covers of ivory relief and silver; a marvellous Thirteenth Century Spanish illuminated Commentary on the Apocalypse by St. Beatus of Liebana; and a very lovely illuminated missal in Latin, hand-done in Fourteenth Century Italian work. All appropriate companions, these, to the Ninth Century Gospels in Latin, whose entire text is written by an unknown French manuscript writer in letters of burnished gold on vellum in varying shades of royal purple—kingly gift, indeed, presented to Henry the Eighth, "Defender of the Faith," by Pope Leo X. The copying was probably done in the "Palace School" of Charlemagne.

Wherever you find collections of ancient coins, look for the crosses of early Byzantine emperors, Constantine, Justin, Basil and the interesting Christian Empress Galla Placidia. (See page 68.) Lane prizes two of these cross-bearing coins in his collection.

Chapter Three

CROSSES FROM THE LAND OF THE CROSS

PALESTINE to-day offers a fascinating variety of crosses to travellers interested in studying their details.

To our acquisition of a Crusader's or Jerusalem cross belongs one of our treasured experiences. We had been lingering in the shadowy intricacies of the chapels of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, when someone suggested that we go into the sacristy to see the original sword, spurs and cross of Godfrey de Bouillon, elected the first Christian King of Jerusalem. Instantly we were intrigued by the design of this square cross, or cross potent, with a small square crosslet in each of its corners. Proceeding at once to our Jerusalem silver merchant, N. Ohan, in his shop by the Jaffa Gate, we enquired if he had a miniature of this historic emblem.

Now this little cave-like stall just west of the ancient city wall, is to us one of the most intriguing shops in the world. It ranks in our affection next to the fanciful one conducted by the Sheep in "Alice in Wonderland." Always our visits to it are high spots in our Jerusalem journeys. Mr. Ohan is a Christian Arab, whose precious wares have been victims of the long disorders in the "Too-Much-Promised Land." Along with him the unseen silversmiths who are his craftsmen have suffered, too—those who in the narrow back streets of the Holy City fashion with cunning skill inherited from generations of Jerusalem

silversmiths, whatever our whims call into being. Sometimes it is an intaglio ring mounting, again a "Lady Allenby chain," whose original Mr. Ohan designed in 1917 for General Allenby to take home to his gracious lady when the deliverer of Jerusalem honoured this antique shop with a visit.

Of some value in his own adjustment during these years of no-trade has been the fact that Mr. Ohan's own hobby is the same as ours—the gathering of unique crosses of Christendom. His own personal collection is seldom seen by visitors to his shop by the Jaffa Gate. We had been customers for years, before he confided his hobby even to us. It was only after we had come to his treasure house time and again that he opened his vault and brought forth his rare collection.

But always we find plenty to thrill our historic, religious and æsthetic sensibilities in the contents of the wall cases and shelves of the shop by the Jaffa Gate. Egyptian scarabs, Arab necklaces of carved silver and wide link-bracelets cherished by Bedouin women, gleaming Roman glass, pre-Christian pottery, Byzantine coins, and Damascus daggers, delight our imagination. His "commercial" crosses he hangs where pious visitors to the city of Christ's crucifixion may see them hanging by their heavy hand-wrought chains. For Mr. Ohan keeps in touch with Jerusalem clergy overstocked with votive crosses presented to them by pilgrims from many nations and secures thus a wide variety of traditional designs.

Yet in spite of the many crosses we have bought in the shop by the Jaffa Gate, the securing of our first, the Jerusalem cross, will always stand out as an event of importance.

Asked whether he had a Jerusalem cross like that of Godfrey, he smiled as if an old favourite had again been called for.

"Yes," he replied, "I sent my silversmith down to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre to draw the design. Here is one reduced

in size but with exactly the same proportions. Do you know its meaning? The large square cross represents the wound in the Saviour's side; the smaller crosslets, the wounds in His hands and feet. Or the five principalities which made up the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem. Or, as others believe, the five crosses of the Jerusalem cross symbolize Christ and the four Evangelists; or the five nations who went to the Crusades to free the tomb of Christ from the Moslem—England, France, Italy, Spain, Germany. Notice how the large cross is of the 'crutch cross' variety, a 'potent' or an 'enabling cross,' because the faithful believer leans upon its strength and rebuilds his faith as he worships. The five rubies denote the wounds of Christ. This cross was incorporated into the seal and arms of Jerusalem by the Latin Kings of Jerusalem and began to appear on Crusader coins, those of Cyprus particularly. How Godfrey came to choose this particular type of cross as his own, we do not know. But we believe that he one day saw an old Armenian cross of this design and adapted it to his own use, giving it a richer symbolism than it had previously possessed. There are several examples of this in the Armenian Convent in Jerusalem. And in the rock-cut Convent 'Anee' near Kars in the Caucasus there was in the Ninth Century an Armenian crutch cross such as we to-day call the Jerusalem cross. Godfrey liked the old design, symbolic of aged pilgrims who leaned on their crutches as they prayed."

Some authorities say that Godfrey also used the Lorraine cross, with its parallel arms and that this is the true Crusaders' cross. But we prefer to think that if Godfrey came to the Holy Land bearing the cross of Lorraine he adopted during his Holy Land experiences this richer symbol of his universal Lord, crucified outside the city wall.

The Jerusalem cross which we secured from Mr. Ohan is of

careful Arab workmanship, studded with irregular oval red stones, uncut cabouchons. It hangs from a heavy chain of twisted silver, like those used by Eastern churches to suspend their lamps.

As we walked up Jaffa Road with the Jerusalem cross in hand, we thought with profound admiration about that "best Crusader of All," the humble Godfrey who from his camp on the site now occupied by the Palestine Archæological Museum directed the siege of Jerusalem in 1099 and entered the Temple Area, claiming it for Christendom. After declining the crown in favour of his brother Baldwin, he continued his noble work until having contracted a fever in the marshes of Huleh in northern Galilee—the very section which is being drained to-day for Jewish colonists—he died in Jaffa on July 18, 1100, only a little more than forty years of age, "the wisest and best of all the Latin princes, red-bearded, comely, fine," whose favourite title was, Defender of the Sepulchre of Christ.

Appropriately Godfrey was buried under the site accepted as Calvary during the Crusades, covered by the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which to-day, as we have said, treasures in its sacristy his Norman sword, spurs and large pectoral cross. Wild Khwarizmians marauded his tomb, so that it is no more. But we know that it bore this inscription, whose form reminds us of the one found on a leaden cross in the traditional tomb of King Arthur at Glastonbury, England. Godfrey's reads:

*"Hic jacet inclitus Dux Godefridus
De Bullon, qui tantam istam terram
Aquisivit cultui Christiano
Cujus anima regnet cum Cristo. Amen."*

There is no tomb of Godfrey to visit in Jerusalem to-day. But set in the paving of the court of the Church of the Holy Sepul-

chre, close by the Twelfth Century Crusader portals with their famous pointed arches dogtoothed with dentils, is the tomb of another good Crusader, Philip D'Aubigny, bearing on its stone slab a carved likeness of the long, Crusader sword of Godfrey with its hilt in the shape of a cross. This very type of sword in fact, was eagerly sought by European churches during the Renaissance to use as altar crosses. The Jerusalem cross has become a favourite symbol on the altars of American Protestant churches which are accenting the chancel type of architecture. We have seen it even in remote Amman, Trans-Jordan, affixed to the car of a priest of the Franciscan order, whose emblem it is.

Long we have yearned to possess an Abyssinian cross, one of the most poignant in the world, since the "betrayal and arrest" of this Christian, though unprivileged, Ethiopian nation. Twice, on the roof of Helena's Chapel at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem we interviewed the tall dark priests who there have their pathetic colony, supported by gifts from African Christians under the "chaperonage" of the larger Coptic Church of Egypt established by John Mark. Always they declined either to part with their own crosses, very naturally, or to reveal where we might secure one. They maintained a dignified exclusiveness in their miserable hovels improvised from boards and cans, after the manner of Negro cabins in the old south of our country. Camera-shy at first, the priests were more gracious when our Moslem escort assured them that we were "Americans, and very sorry for the fate of the Abyssinian Christians in Ethiopia." Their homes were not better than kennels. Yet over each miserable door, an Abyssinian cross was painted. One old priest, named Gabriel, claims more than a hundred years and remembers countless processions of Holy Week when swarthy pilgrims tent out upon the sacred roof

and engage in their ancient ceremonies of the Easter. Every Friday, Gabriel told us, the Abyssinians fast, because on that day, Jesus was crucified.

A young acolyte led us to their sacred chapel on the roof, above the crypt where Queen Helena, the first woman archaeologist, believed in that credulous Fourth Century that she had found the true cross of Christ and signalled the news by flares of fire up the coast and across the Mediterranean to her son, Constantine, the Emperor. Taking off his shoes with profound reverence, the youth motioned us into the dark interior of this "Jerusalem headquarters" allotted to his people. The chapel was very dark and not more than ten feet by twenty in size, with a poor little inner chamber for their chancel. Everything was very much "improvised," after the manner of reverent but impoverished people. But the little shrine contains a few treasures, including the famous tall "crutch cross" with its ivory handle.

The boy then lighted a candle and showed us a precious book—in English! We read its title, "The Book of the Riches of Kings—a Life of Takla and of the Miracles of Takla." How symbolic—a book of the *riches of kings*, treasured by this impoverished and dispossessed people! But we were still without an Abyssinian cross for our collection.

A few years later we met in Jerusalem our Moslem friend Jacob, "Keeper of the Key," who at once led us to the shop of a Hebrew friend who brought out not one, but several choice Abyssinian crosses, two of which looked as if carved from the Maria Theresa "thalers" preferred by Ethiopian silversmiths for this purpose. One of the most typical is a cross crosslet of the type which topped the crown of Hailie Selassie. The one at the right of picture, crudely etched with a Christ on his cross, attended by Mary, John and angels suggests the gen-

eral shape of the famous gilt-bronze Abyssinian processional cross in the British Museum; and the one presented by the Emperor to the National Cathedral at Washington, after Bishop Freeman had prayed for him on his coronation day in 1930. The cross at the top of picture is the oldest in design, a simple pattée bearing on each arm the buds symbolic of the Ark of the Covenant, which the Abyssinians say that Menelik I, son of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba brought to their country when he returned from his education in Jerusalem. From an artistic and historic standpoint our three Abyssinian crosses are valuable. Travellers along the caravan routes where these are found consider them the most characteristic treasures afforded by this country where the Christian men and women wear crosses from babyhood. All these crosses have equal arms, except those influenced by the Portuguese Jesuits, who brought the western type.

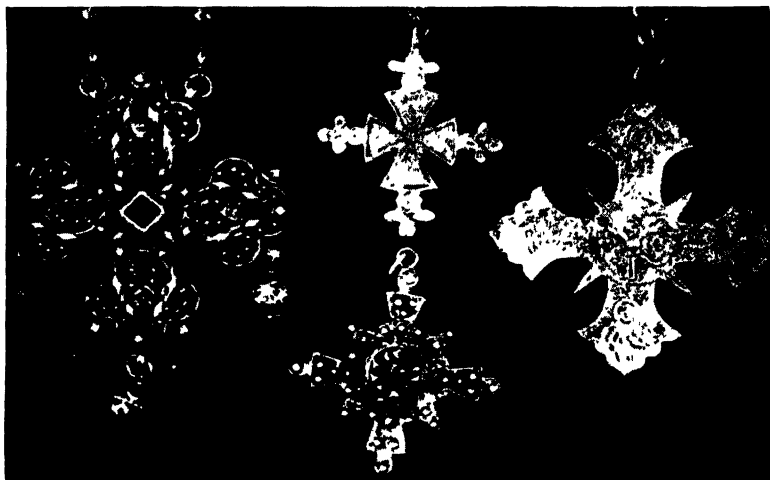
The Abyssinian Church was founded from Coptic Alexandria in the Fourth Century, with its capital at Axum. Frumentius, its first Bishop, was consecrated by Athanasius (A.D. 340-346). Their liturgy, like that of the Copts, derives from the Alexandrian liturgy developed in Egypt by St. Mark. Like their huts, their thatched churches are circular, an example of which we have seen in Jerusalem. The primitive people of the Abyssinian Church in Africa were a mixture of Hamitic, Semitic, and Negro blood and were influenced by Arab culture filtering in from Yeman along the Red Sea before the Christian era. During the Middle Ages the Abyssinians resisted efforts to convert them to Latin Christianity, but in the Sixteenth Century were controlled by the Jesuits. In the Nineteenth Century, after long isolation from the civilized world, they renewed connection with Egypt. Up until now their chief patriarch or "Abuna" has been nominated by the Coptic Patriarch

of Alexandria. Present leadership, however, is quite a different matter since the incorporation into the Italian Empire. Certainly, we admit that some purging is needed for a faith which had taken over Jewish practices, Moslem customs and Christian superstitions from neighbours and conquerors.

The same week we found our Abyssinian crosses in Jerusalem, we came upon two rare bronze ones dating actually from the period of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem (established 1099 A.D.). These very valuable historic specimens came to light when workmen, digging foundations for a concrete apartment house in the "new Jerusalem," struck against a Crusader tomb. The one at left of picture, crudely executed, is arranged with a loop to attach it to the leather strap of its wearer's military trappings, as he carried it on his heart when striding off to do battle against the "Infidels." It is not of the Lorraine type (with double cross bar) used sometimes by early Crusaders, or of the true Crusader type associated with Godfrey de Bouillon. This bronze cross, as well as the other square bronze one at right of the picture, has so distinctively Byzantine an aspect that we believe it may have been picked up by this Crusader-owner as he passed through Constantinople, the great rallying point where the knights met as they rushed by thousands, out of Dark Age Europe into Asia Minor en route to Palestine—and with what crash of character, morality, and motive we read all too vividly in the contemporary chronicles of Anna Comnena of Constantinople. Or perhaps the Crusader secured it from a war-like Avar of Hungary.

As we look at these truly eloquent, historic crosses, we ponder the parallel between Crusader ambitions and the policy of present-day Jews returning to the Holy Land of three faiths. When Crusader ambitions ceased to be purely religious, as preached by Peter the Hermit and practised by the first worthy

PLATE THREE



ARMENIAN, ABYSSINIAN AND TRANS-JORDAN CROSSES

See text, pages 46, 50 and 51



THREE BYZANTINE CROSSES FROM ISTANBUL

leaders of the Knights, and became both economic and political, their enterprise fell into disastrous disorder, culminating in final departure from the land of their hopes. They embarked from Athlit Castle and took up settlement in Cyprus, Malta and later, in Rhodes. We wonder if our contemporary seekers-after-a-national-home in the same unproductive little land already containing twice as many Arabs will experience the same débâcle of their dreams? Certainly many of them are motivated by as distinct economic and political aims as the Crusaders, to the exclusion of the spiritual, if the spirit of Tel Aviv is to be taken as fair criterion.

The bronze cross at right of photograph is an excellent specimen of Byzantine design from Constantinople, dating possibly from 1000 A.D. It shows the charming proportions of the cross which is neither Greek, nor Latin—neither square nor unequal-limbed. Some Crusader carried it into his “holy warfare” and laid down his life in the little grey town of Mediæval Jerusalem, smaller than Antioch, lacking in the gardens and rivulets cherished by all easterners, but exclusive behind its high walls enclosing the closely-built houses with their white-washed domes.

To our Palestinian group we added subsequently several other types. One is a crude old silver cross of Roman shape, made in Trans-Jordan by an Arab Christian. Its etching of a vine and a crucified Saviour are so crude as to be almost revolting, yet we treasure this witness of the faith of some Christian in those appealing regions “over Jordan” from which spies entered to survey the “Promised Land.” It is of the amulet type opening on a hinge to contain precious things. And always it will speak to us of those ninety thousand Arab Christians of Palestine who without sharing the political views of the Mufti’s

terrorist party, paid heavy price of sacrifice during the disorders of 1936-1939.

Another Trans-Jordan Christian cross we found in Madeba, and the pleasing embossing on this square Greek type with a blue stone at its centre, recalls that very ancient Christian centre in the town of Madeba, with its famous Sixth Century mosaic map preserved by Greeks from Karek who built a church over it.

Indeed the Trans-Jordan of Emir Abdullah is rich in lore of Christian iconography, whether we visit the new excavations at Mount Nebo overlooking the deep Jordan Valley, or those at Jerash, that very elaborate Græco-Roman city founded by veterans from the campaigns of Alexander the Great. Crosses at Jerash are seen on uncovered churches built up from pagan temples. And at Jerash has been found in the ruins of a primitive Fifth Century church at the end of the impressive "Street of the Columns" what Dr. John Garstang has said may be "the earliest sculptured head of Christ," a head as god-like as that of Olympic Zeus, yet eloquent with the intense agony of atoning suffering which belongs only to the Son of God. This sculptured head, bearded, may date from the Second Century. If so, it reveals what an artist living in Palestine within a comparatively short time after the death of Christ, may have thought his appearance to be—our earliest portrait sculpture, perhaps. Dr. Garstang, excavating for the British School of Archæology at Jerusalem, believed that the churches of Jerash in Trans-Jordan only fifty-five miles northeast of Jerusalem, perhaps saw the beginnings of Christian liturgy, and "the development of Christian architecture, and Christian ritual from the pagan, collateratively, maybe, and before Christianity received official recognition." If so, the amazing head discovered there, indicates that Christian art and iconography also moved forward at

Jerash. As we walked among the ruins of this thrillingly lovely "City of a Thousand Columns" in its oasis at the desert's edge,* we heard the footsteps of the infant church, darting in and out among temples to Artemis and Jupiter.

One of our other prized crosses from the Shop by the Jaffa Gate is a Coptic one, reminiscent of the Egyptian Church John Mark left as his heritage at Alexandria in the First Century. This, like the Armenian, reflects a Persian influence, based on conventionalized flowers which hang their blue and silver beauty from the main cross, like cruciform florets. At the heart of the design is a slender mother-of-pearl cross surrounded by tracery of pierced silver, from whose base dangles a Coptic ostrich egg, symbolic of eternal watchfulness. For, say the Copts, as the mother ostrich never deserts her eggs, neither does Christ fail to keep watch over his Church. To the Copts, as well as the Abyssinians, the eggs which dangle from the chains of their sanctuary lamps suggest the ancient belief that "the world was created from an egg." The old Coptic Church sometimes used the ancient Egyptian hieroglyph "ankh" or key of life for its cross. Mediæval travellers to Jerusalem said that Copts were there, but in small numbers, whose bishop wore a crown like the Greek patriarch's; and their monks, white pointed cowls. For centuries they practised the ancient "kiss of peace" and from shapely silver vessels, sprinkled holy water on the worshippers.

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem is shared by five Christian groups. We have crosses from each of those bodies. We have already mentioned four: the Abyssinian, the Coptic, the Greek, the Latin. And now it is timely for us to introduce you to two Armenian crosses in our collection, the more elaborate of which is one of the most elegant in the group. Without any suggestion of a crucifix, the elaborate Armenian

* See "Footprints in Palestine," Madeleine S. Miller, page 72. (Revell).

cross presents a symbol of elegant, conventional beauty, pierced in gilded silver with lace-like richness. It is of course, a square cross, with trefoil ends, typifying the Trinity. Small leafy designs in the four corners suggest the Jerusalem cross to which it is definitely related. Pendant from the three lower arms of the cross are charming carved lamps or decorated ostrich eggs—who can tell which? At its centre is the favourite blood-red ruby, surrounded by the twisted rope of eternity and a crown. This lovely cross hangs from an elaborate chain, in which the “grain of wheat” alternates with the ostrich egg. A simpler silver cross of Armenian design resembles the Maltese, “ancrée” cross, surrounded by a leafy crown of immortal life.

The Armenian Christian Church developed a distinctive form of art, as well as of ritual. As to the latter, they did not mingle water with wine at the Eucharist; nor did they celebrate the Nativity as a feast, but a fast, making instead, a festival of the Epiphany. Armenian priests were expected to marry. And as to their sacred art, they broke off with the Hellenistic “representational” forms employed by picture-loving Byzantine Greeks, and followed the Persian penchant for oriental geometric designs, flowing floral patterns and animal symbols. They sympathized with the iconoclasts—“image breakers” and picture-defacers—who from 726 A.D. under Emperor Leo III, for one hundred years protested against depiction of Christ and heroes of the faith. The Armenians could not help seeing the onrush of victorious Moslem Arabs who spurned everything akin to idols. And by this observation their sacred art was influenced. This was natural in an age when, for several centuries prior to the Crusades, the tolerant Moslem rulers of the Holy Land allowed Christians of many viewpoints to come as pilgrims. In fact, they employed Christian artists to collaborate in the ornamentation of their Dome of the Rock on Mount Moriah

in Jerusalem. And in many an Egyptian mosque we have seen tucked away, evidences of Christian craftsmen.

Before leaving our group of crosses from the Land of the Cross, let us look to two from the little town of Bethlehem which had drifted into the Shop by the Jaffa Gate for sale, through some adversity of their owners. Bethlehem, with a cross of its own? You think only of the star as symbol of this radiant hilltop town which has changed the thinking of the world?

But our own silver cross which we wear and treasure in its own special place in our hobby chest at home, is a perfect specimen of the native Bethlehem cross, worn by virtuous Christian matrons on the embroidered bibs of their long-sleeved, flowing gowns. It has an intricate symbolism. Made in a unique mould, only by villagers of this sweet Judean hill-town, it embodies the joyousness which characterizes this Christian people to-day. It belongs to the family of square eastern crosses and suggests a "Croix de Guerre." Having something in each of its corners, it is, very appropriately, related to the Jerusalem cross—for Bethlehem's history is so closely knit with Crusaders that memories of this Mediæval age still float about in the Frankish gowns and high white head-dress. Each arm of the Bethlehem cross terminates in a cluster of three palm leaves, symbolic of the Trinity, and of victory. Together, the twelve leaves stand for Christ's Twelve Men. Through the intersection run four spear-points, reminiscent of the lances which pierced His side. The centre of the cross has, like the corona of a passion flower, a crown of thorns and a sun, symbolic of righteousness. A concealed circle, symbolic of eternity, completes the design. Little wonder that genuine Bethlehem crosses are rare to come upon—except their cheap American-made imitations in Greenwich Village.

A simpler form of the true Bethlehem cross is seen frequently. Worn by a Bethlehemite of poorer state, it nevertheless has distinctive charm and its rounded arms always remind us of the legend that the dogwood, having been the tree to which our Saviour was affixed, ever after gave its flowers the form of a square cross marked with drops of blood. Even this simpler Bethlehem cross has pendant lamps to light its wearer's way.

Let it not be taken for irreverence when we say that one of our Palestine crosses is tinged with a bit of childish grotesqueness, almost humorous. It is the Jericho cross and came from that oasis settlement down on the edge of the Judean Wilderness, at the beginning of the Jordan Plain. It began by being a distinctively Russian cross, similar to the Eighteenth Century ones having a heart at their centre with a tiny cross rising from the heart. But to its arms are attached not only a series of birds, symbolic of the Holy Spirit, but little dangling pendants of red coral and silver sequins—altogether the most “dressed up” cross of the group. We can imagine it about the neck of a Christian Arab woman of Jericho, worn on high festival days, when she walked “up to Jerusalem,” amid furtive glances at every approaching stranger, lest again on this ancient Jericho Road, one should “fall among thieves” and be waylaid.

And so, in this Land of the Eternal Cross, we have seen crosses—on domes and gables of churches, reared by many nations. On Mount Scopus, where the white crosses of men sacrificed in the World War are within sight of Calvary. And in Gethsemane, on the Garden gates, we have seen crosses, square crosses, carrying in their corners the eloquent Greek letters, Alpha and Omega, signifying Christ our beginning and our end. With even more appropriateness than on Calvary, crosses loom in Gethsemane. Christ, crouching here in the shadows

behind a friendly rock on that moonlit night of his betrayal, could almost see Golgotha where his cross was soon to hang. It was but a few paces, over the Kidron and up along the edge of the crenelated city wall. And in his own heart of flesh at that darkest hour in the world's history, Jesus was already erecting the spiritual cross of our redemption.

"Into the woods my Master went,
Clean forspent, forspent;
Into the woods my Master came,
Forspent with love and shame.
But the olives they were not blind to him,
The little grey leaves were kind to him,
The thorn-tree had a mind to him,
When into the woods he came."

(Sidney Lanier.)

Chapter Four

THE BEAUTY OF THE BYZANTINE

AFTER reading the earliest symbols of Christian faith in the Catacombs of Rome, we were "minded" to go to the shores of the Golden Horn where Constantine's "New Rome" on its seven hills at the crossroads of Asia and Europe took up the expression through art of the triumphant advance of the cross in the Fourth Century. For Byzantine artists created the first full-grown Christian style.

In Istanbul we became enmeshed in the beauty of the Byzantine, a few specimens of which we subsequently added to our collection of crosses. We saw in the domed square churches of the strategic triangular headland along the Bosphorus, the merging of the Early Christian with its rectangular basilicas into the ornate Byzantine. In mosaic, metal, ivory, marble, and stone the symbols of the triumphant royal Redeemer were lifted high until in 1453 the crescent of onrushing Moslem enthusiasts supplanted the cross and the Osmanli Emperor Mohammed II defeated the last of the Greek Christian Emperors, Constantine XIII. The hand-to-hand encounter of the two rulers at the Romanus Gate forms one of the most poignant episodes in the history of warring man. Yet the tragedy of the battered walls of the eastern capital had a fructifying effect, for it scattered over Europe the scholars and artists who had been sheltered behind their famous landward bulwark. These men

contributed to the revival of learning which, under the stimulus of such men as Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, led the Dark Age of Europe out into the glories of the Renaissance.

A few dates may help us identify the periods to which we shall refer in discussing the finding of our various crosses. The Early Christian period runs from the time when Jesus attracted his first adherents, up to 450 A.D. The Mediæval Period from about 300 to 1300 A.D., during which time the term Byzantine or Eastern was applied to the art which developed with Constantinople as its capital; and the word Gothic or Western to what developed in the western Mediterranean and Europe. Some authorities date the Byzantine period from 450 to 1453—a rich thousand years of creative art centring in the high peaks of the Sixth, Tenth and Twelfth Centuries. The Early Christian is sometimes regarded as a transition between the Classical and the Byzantine. Then came the Renaissance or new birth of art and learning beginning in the Fourteenth Century with its wonderful quickening of religion, discovery, business, literature and all of life. The Post-Renaissance merged into our own Modern Age.

So artistic a race as the Mediterranean people could not fail to express in beauty their first flush of Christian enthusiasm. Hence, in Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Greece, and Thrace, as well as Italy, we found a rich succession of iconographic evidence indicating the vital grip in which the new faith held its acolytes. A sincerity and a power not found in late-Hellenic art throb through the sacred art of early believers in the Way. The formality introduced by Persian motives vanishes before the reality of the fresh graphic ideas as we have seen even in the crude graffiti and wall frescoes of the Roman Catacombs. There was as yet no central authority at Rome to dominate and clamp down orthodox rules of construction.

If the flower of Christian art budded in the mosaics and painting of Egyptian Alexandria, surely it matured in the golden symbolism of Sancta Sophia in Constantinople, seat of the artistic, extravagant Byzantine Court in the Golden Age of the Eastern Roman Empire, from Constantine the Great (330-337 A.D.) through Justinian (527-565 A.D.) and Heraclius (610-641 A.D.). The Byzantine Greeks have given the world its most elegant Christian art, surpassed by none, unless by the Renaissance itself.

Byzantines portrayed a gorgeously-attired, wide-eyed, triumphant Christ with adulating emperors prostrating themselves before his imperial throne. Thus did they teach the supremacy of Christ to a humble multitude, as we have seen in the recently uncovered mosaics of Sancta Sophia, crowning gem of eastern Christendom, constructed by Justinian at a cost of fifty million dollars in our currency and containing now after centuries of molestation, the greatest series of mosaics in the world, with San Marco, Venice and Monreale, Sicily, rivalling them in extent and little Daphni church on the outskirts of Athens rivaling them in beauty. Sancta Sophia is the standard by which all other Byzantine art is measured. For hundreds of years, its crosses, arches, domes and half-domes influenced the churches of Greece, Cyprus, Russia and the Middle East. Their influence continues to-day in modern churches, such as St. Bartholomew's, New York.

The uncovering of eight exquisite Byzantine crosses in the narthex of Aya Sophia in Istanbul has given a new thrill to everyone inspired by fine arts in religion. As we looked up to these tall stately crosses with their jewelled ends of ruby mosaic, they recalled to us the historic Christmas day in 587 when Emperor Justinian the Great exclaimed upon the completion of this vast church, the gem of Christendom, "Thanks be to God, who

has permitted me to accomplish this. Solomon, I have out-rivalled thee!" For a thousand years these eight crosses with their background of gold mosaics looked down on eastern Christendom at worship. For Sancta Sophia was a capital of our faith in those glowing centuries when the cross was supreme, following Constantine's vision of it in Italian skies. The sign by which he conquered was made in 313 the official emblem of the Roman Empire, proclaimed so in the old rostra of the Forum near "The Golden Milestone" by which distances throughout the realm were measured. When the Moslem conquest claimed Sancta Sophia for a mosque in 1453 the crosses and their Christ were covered with cheap paint and plaster. But now again in our time the wide-eyed, short-bearded regal Byzantine Christ of Sixth Century portrayals is again gleaming through. By the tolerant patronage of the late Ghazi Kemal Atatürk and the skill of an American artist-scholar, Dr. Thomas Whittemore of the Byzantine Institute, a remarkable restoration has been effected. With delicate chisels the covering has been removed. With the whole mosaic scheme of the interior revealed and Christ again leaning in benediction above the heads of the people, Sancta Sophia is one of the most impressive structures in the world. Every Christian rejoices that "He could not be hid." For he himself is the "Jewel of Christendom."

One of our happiest Byzantine travel experiences came one morning when standing with Dr. Whittemore, beneath the gleaming golden lunettes of mosaic narrative in Sancta Sophia which he has just lately brought back from their Moslem camouflage of plaster. In the vestibule he called our attention to the radiance of the glittering golden background setting forth in clear-cut blues and reds and greens the pleasing pomp of an imperial Mary-enthroned, holding on her lap a charming Child, carrying a scroll of purple and extending his young arms in

blessing with the Emperor Constantine kneeling to offer them the walls of the city and Justinian a model of Sancta Sophia.

"The glory of these mosaics has never been excelled," said Dr. Whittemore. "Look at the amazingly soft blue tones of Mary's gown, the colour of deep-blue cornflowers. See how her gown is trimmed with meadow-green, laid on bands of gold; notice the sandals of delicate gold outlined with rich red; the cruciferous nimbus of darker red; the delicate emerald greens beneath the throne; the whole background of gleaming gold, and the victorious inscription in Greek."

Then leading us into the narthex he pointed to the Byzantine Christ-Enthroned which he had just restored to its original beauty. "The gaze of the Saviour," said Dr. Whittemore, "gives an impression of somewhat languid sad remoteness, conveyed by the face with its wide-open, hazel eyes, its gentle mouth, its oval setting of profuse locks. He is here inviting us into the vast apse. Even during the Moslem use of Sancta Sophia as a mosque, intriguing glimpses of his extended arms have peered faintly through the paint.

"Is it not marvellous," he said, "how artists whose names we shall never know, introduced these frank, gorgeous colours into liquid glass; and for the tiny cubes of gold and silver, laid the precious leaf on glass surfaces, covering them with a top layer of glass? Possibly they learned their skill from Egypt, a great glass-making centre."

And to ourselves we thought, "Yes, and perhaps Phoenician Byblos, ancient port and glass-making centre on the Syrian coast, supplied special sand from her Belus River for the enterprise." We always like to put in a good word for Byblos, the papyrus centre which gave us our word, "Bible."

So from Sancta Sophia we have carried into our collection of crosses, the marble-encrusted, ancient-pillared sanctuary with

its amazing dome—one hundred and eight feet broad by only forty-six wide—the background and source of all the stately Byzantine crosses we have seen on the capitals of Sant' Apollinare in Ravenna; the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem and elsewhere.

I have always felt the charm of the substantial Byzantine type of cross—far lovelier than the tall, thin Latin type. There is a Byzantine beauty of proportion to these crosses which is captivating. Years ago, in Salerno, Italy, we were attracted to a series of twenty-one Byzantine crosses on the famous bronze doors of the cathedral, hammered out in Constantinople by Eleventh Century artists. Their beauty amid the dilapidation of San Matteo tempted us to carry off these gems, as Samson did the gates of Gaza. Their crosses have ever since remained our measuring rod for Byzantine types. I think that of the hundreds of varieties the Byzantine remains our favourite. I could draw its outline in my sleep.

The typical Byzantine cross is almost square—although even in Sancta Sophia we find many Latin crosses. In the Sixth Century, the cleavage between eastern and western Church had not occurred. The upright of the Byzantine is sometimes slightly longer than the transverse, but the intersection occurs near the centre of the upright, creating a beautiful balance. Some of its most exquisite forms appear on the heavy silver communion plates and chalices for which Byzantine metal workers were noted, the men who in the "Dark Ages" created the solid gold altar of Sancta Sophia and the solid silver iconostasis, even as Cellini wrought his metallic marvels of the Italian Renaissance. The ground plans of typical Byzantine churches, too, trace this cross, surmounted by domes, as, the Church of St. Saviour in Istanbul, built by Mary Dukaina for martyrs under Diocletian, and adorned with such resplendent mosaics by Justinian, that

Moslems claimed it for a mosque, known to-day as the "Mosaic Mosque" or "Khorah Mosque."

One day last summer, I unexpectedly fell heir to a Byzantine cross. A young Vassar friend who had lately indulged her hobby for Mediterranean beauty by purchasing a French villa set among roses where indigo sea breaks over yellow sand, was showing us her estate. "You have a hobby for crosses, haven't you?" she asked. "Well, I would like to add one to your collection. It is the only one I have." Going up-stairs, she returned and placed in my hand one whose silver was hoary-black, but from whose heart flashed a ruby-red stone, with effulgent silver rays bursting from it, as in the Resurrection Cross. She had bought it of a Russian refugee in the old bazaar of Istanbul and had no idea of its age, although its antiquity is very evident. To us, it is true to Byzantine lines of substantial beauty, as it towers over the wrecks of time that have crashed landward walls and grappling armies to the ground. Just as I am writing these words we have learned that she has offered her villa for a hospital and is driving a French ambulance.

On our desk there stands a thousand-year old bronze lamp—very small, and crudely fashioned, but speaking the intimate workmanship of a pious heart, for its handle is a beautifully-proportioned eastern cross. It was picked up in Istanbul by a workman excavating between the Blue Mosque of Achmet and the Sea of Marmara, helping scientists in their search for the Sacred Palace of Byzantine Emperors—a thrilling "dig" which we visited with a member of the staff from St. Andrew's University, Glasgow. This little bronze lamp had lain for centuries, hidden deep under débris of war after war for possession of Seraglio Point. Evidently someone running from an enemy on a windy night had let it fall while its flame was still burning, for its tiny lid is congealed against the handle. Perhaps the

little bronze lamp had stood in the votive niche of some young woman of the court along about the year 1341. She had just returned to her room after the palace revels. Going to her little private altar she lighted a tiny lamp given her by a pious uncle when it was already three hundred years old. Looking from her marble balcony, she saw unfriendly black galleys come sweeping suddenly down the Marmara to attack the Cantacuzene emperor. She heard the whole city rise in sudden turmoil. "Black John" and his Palæological dynasty were on the march. The reigning emperor fled from the palace without halting to warn his court. He took refuge with Turkish guards in Blachernæ Citadel. But our beautiful young lady of the little bronze lamp, clutching her treasure, ran out with it into the night hoping to reach a safe monastery in the suburbs or within the new circular fortress at the Golden Gate. She stumbled, fell, was captured, and her lamp lost in the general débris to which the palace precinct was pulverized. At least this is the story with which our fancy has surrounded the eloquent bronze lamp now standing before me.

What a handle! In the shape of a harmoniously proportioned Byzantine cross. A cross for a handle! Have you ever used your cross for that? A cross for light! Have you ever used yours for that? A light from a cross, a light from *the cross*, which on everybody's Easter especially reminds us that life cannot be holden of death any more than crocuses on an April hill or snowdrops under a hedge, or Christ in Joseph's Garden, when his new life burst through stone itself to greet his Witnesses, "very early . . . when the sun had risen."

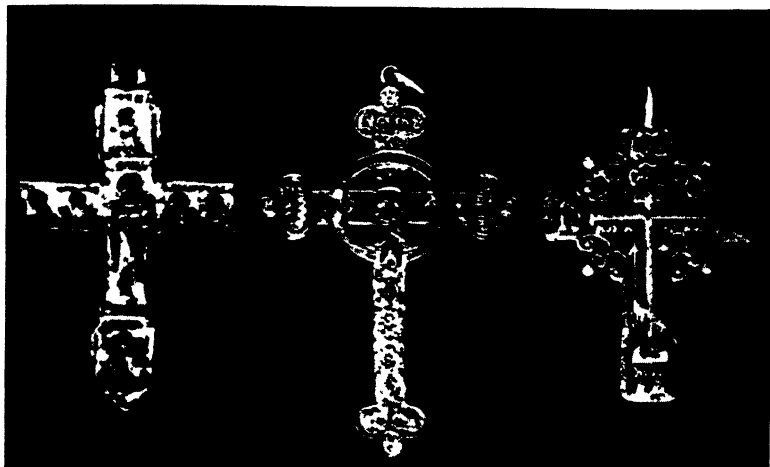
Many Early Christian and Byzantine lamps of clay and bronze have a primitive beauty which is very appealing. One of the choicest collections we have seen is housed in the new Museum of Archæology in ancient Corinth. There, side by side

with pottery running from prehistoric times through the Byzantine, is an amazing group of Græco-Roman lamps arranged in sequence, from the Sixth Century before Christ when pagan symbols adorned their handles, down to Christian times when the cross appeared. In the "Fourteenth Egyptian Room" of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, also, there is a sequence of Roman and Early Christian crosses and other articles dating from 30 B.C. to 640 A.D. and including the Helen Gould Shepherd collection of terra cotta lamps. The latter are particularly appealing, representing the piety of poor worshippers who had only the clay of the earth to express their reverence for the life-bringing cross. We treasure several of these Palestine terra cotta lamps in our collection, one bearing a stately little square cross-potent given to us by the young women of my "Second Mile Bible Class." Many of these lamps are coming to light in Jerusalem to-day where excavations for new villas are running into ruins of Early Christian homes.

From the Byzantine period you may see in New York also, in the Metropolitan Museum, some rare specimens of gold jewellery dating from the Eleventh or Twelfth Century, chaste examples of that age of worldly magnificence which decorated its golden, pearl-rimmed ear-rings and necklaces with blue enamel crosses and sacred birds.

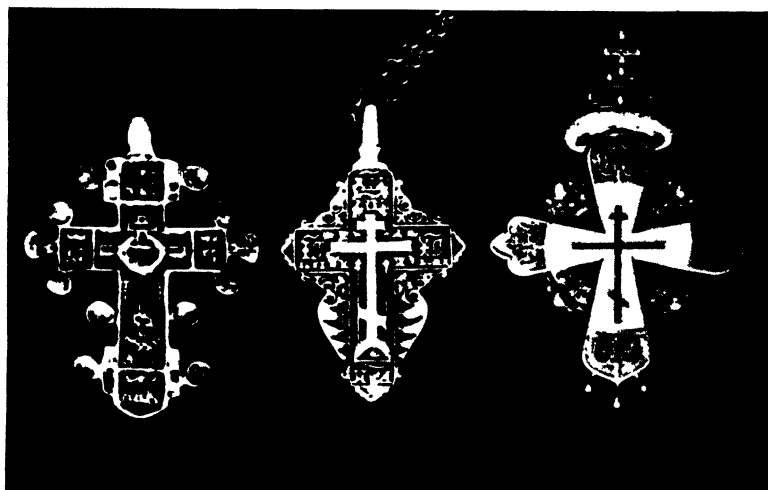
Three other interesting crosses we have added to our collection from the Byzantine land long claimed by the crescent of Islam. Two are of bronze, possibly nine hundred years old. One of these is the broken half of a reliquary at whose centre is a nimbed cross-potent. The other has eight round disks extending from its arms—indicative of the eight Beatitudes or of immortality. The circles are arranged in groups of three, for the Trinity—a simple geometric design embossed on this crooked but feelingful little bronze cross. We wonder who

PLATE FOUR



THREE RUSSIAN CROSSES "INHABITED," CHARDRINOS,
WELL-WORN SILVER CROSS

See text pages 79, 84 and 85



THREE ROMANOV CROSSES TATIANA'S, THE CZARINA'S,
THE ROMANOV ANNIVERSARY

See text, pages 75-78

owns the other half of this reliquary? Lane bought our half from the reliable antiquarian "Max Smit" opposite Pera Palace Hotel, whose precious Byzantine rings of gold are sought by American Museums. The third cross is of silver found by us in a musty Turkish bazaar, near the copper stalls. It is overlaid with pleasing blue enamel, with a fragment of ruby red enamel still showing as background for a simple square cross pommeée. It came from the mustiest sector of Istanbul's bazaars.

There are, in sacristies of old-world churches, a few really historic Byzantine crosses. One of the most exquisite is the votive cross of Justinian II, sent to the old St. Peter's Basilica in Rome after Sixth Century eastern artists had paved it with oriental rubies, sapphires and pearls and carved it with raised figures and ancient inscriptions. Its wide transverse arms extended to the universe and its upright of almost equal length reaching skyward, are of ultimate beauty. Crude little pendants from its transverse are typical of the East, whether we see them hanging from sanctuary lamps in the Bethlehem Basilica and Coptic Cairo or in Ravenna.

Leaping like a golden flame across the blue Mediterranean to Italy, Byzantine art made a rich creative impact upon the west which flowered in the several churches of Ravenna which have survived from the Fourth and Fifth and Sixth Centuries when Ravenna was the capital of the western Empire. Ravenna antedates Rome as a capital of religious art. She retains intact one splendid church after another, jewel boxes of sacred beauty. No wonder Dante welcomed here a shelter in his exile. His tomb to-day stands in the midst of Early Christian sarcophagi adorned with some of the richest iconographic symbols we have seen anywhere.

Having drunk deeply at the headwaters of Byzantine inspiration in old Constantinople on several eastern journeys, we

eagerly turned our steps a few weeks ago to Ravenna whose priceless sacred art reveals the greatest eastern influence on the western Mediterranean. We were anxious to crown our long first-hand study of Christian symbolism at Ravenna, the lagoon "city in the sea" which was the western capital of Roman Emperors for centuries.

Quiet little Ravenna, with its citizens flying back and forth to their trades on bicycles, we found a perfect treasure-store of Early Christian and Byzantine art—contained not in a single church, as is the case in Orvieto with its one superb pre-Renaissance Cathedral faced with Fourteenth Century mosaics and marble. We were scarcely prepared for the lavish wealth of iconographic material we found. In fact, not even Rome itself is so satisfying to people whose hobby is collecting symbols of the Christian faith.

We stepped into the amazing interior of Sant' Apollinare Nuovo, the Arian Cathedral erected by the Goth, Theodoric the Great in 500 A.D. The plain red brick exterior of this church which marks the pre-Catholic Italy, gives no hint of the two dazzling processions of Blessed Women and manly Saints in mosaic extending the entire length of the nave above arches whose pillars bear beautifully-proportioned Byzantine crosses. The women's procession culminates in the Three Wise Men's presentation of gifts to a rather adult little infant Jesus, sitting on the lap of a very eastern Mary enthroned like an empress, as in Sancta Sophia. The men saints, with wreaths in hands, approach an equally imperial Christos, enthroned on a cushioned chair with his fine face and chestnut hair and beard accented by a nimbus bearing a square cross. All the ancient chandeliers in Sant' Apollinare resemble Byzantine crowns, with red and green jewels introduced between square crosses and with the eastern ostrich-eggs of glass as pendants. Here is

a church which hushes even boisterous Ravenna children, as they lead in their visiting grandparents and proudly whisper about the miracle of the marching mosaics.

The Ravenna Cathedral offers its share of rich iconographic evidence, in the famous little bronze cross at the right of the altar, portions of which date from the Sixth Century, and in the Sixth Century silver cross of Bishop Agnellus. The Sixth Century pulpit or reading desk, nicknamed "the throne of Arian bishops," rises above a screen carved with what we call a primer of Christian symbolism. It carries six lambs in the top row; then six peacocks for immortality; then a row of six antelopes, typifying young converts, enjoying solitude and drinking the water of life as a hart does at the waterbrooks; below which is a row of six doves; with six ducks and six varieties of "ichthus" on the lowest rows, near the floor. Yet there are scholars who maintain that this ornamentation is without intentional symbolism.

Adjacent to the Cathedral, we found in the Fifth Century Baptistry converted from a Roman bath to a Christian chapel, a thrilling treasure of mosaics made about 450 A.D. and displaying a Roman vitality in their portrayal of the prophets, quite in contrast to the rigid figures in the Sancta Sophia mosaics. Most remarkable is the depiction in the dome above a polygonal font large enough for emersion, of the baptism of Jesus whose body shows through the transparency of the water in rippling mosaics! Quite a triumph for small cubes of glass and gold. No finer mosaics exist in the world than these, the oldest and best in Ravenna. They come from the same early period which has likewise given Ravenna the marvellous beauty of the little Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, the fair Empress and devout Christian matron who, coming from Constantinople as regent for her young brother Honorius son of the eastern Emperor Theo-

dosius, when the lad became western Emperor, erected a noble church in gratitude for her safe arrival. Taken later as wife of the barbarian Ataulphus who carried her off to Gaul, Placidia returned to Ravenna and founded about 440 A.D. the fine little structure which became her mausoleum. It is in the form of an almost-square cross, lined with mosaics of richest tones. The dome is of dark-blue mosaics, spangled with golden stars giving background to a Latin cross surrounded by symbols of the four Evangelists. This large cross is one of the first ever incorporated into a monumental structure. Over the massive sarcophagus of the Empress, large enough to contain her body seated on a cypress throne and resembling an altar facing us as we entered, is a cross-bearing figure of the Saviour. At the opposite end over the entrance is a lunette depicting a charming young Early Christian type of Jesus in the role of a happy shepherd, like David, surrounded by his faithfully-tended sheep, one of which he is feeding. The enthralling and deep-blue mosaic barrel-vaulting is adorned with dainty little flowers and designs looking like magnified snowflakes—certainly a most feminine and right worshipful mausoleum for the wife of Constantius and mother of the ill-fated Roman Emperor Valentinian III. Coming outside to photograph this indescribably lovely little shrine, we saw on top of its red tile roof not a cross but an acorn, symbol of eternal life. The acorn rests also on top of the tomb of the immortal Dante of the "Paradiso" not far away.

Ravenna is associated with several noble women of the pre-Renaissance period, for a tablet on the wall of a certain convent tells of the residence here of Dante's daughter, Beatrice. In the remarkable Church of San Vitale, built in 525 A.D. when Justinian was repulsing through his general Belisarius the good Ostrogoth King Theodoric, we find the portrayal of the Greek Empress Theodora and her court in the gleaming Persian

brocades and jewelled crowns and necklaces of that extravagant period—contemporary portraits of Justinian's golden age. The mosaics in the hem of her garment reproduce the Three Magi of the facade of Bethlehem Basilica.

The small but noble structure of San Vitale reminded us at once of the interior of Sancta Sophia with its central apse under a noble dome, its many arches resting on sculptured capitals, its half domes, its balcony for the women. Yet actually it preceded Sancta Sophia (dedicated in 538) and was suggested by churches in Salonica, with its ground plan based on a Christian baptistry. It is the peak of Byzantine art in the west. Many of the mosaics encrusting the walls are composed of such small tesserae that they look like woven tapestry rather than glass and marble cubes. Surely in San Vitale we saw the greatest impact in the western Mediterranean of the rich ornamentation of Byzantine Christianity. We imagined that we heard the hammers of the artists imported from Constantinople to adorn the sacred walls and to train western workers in their skills. We thought of these when we entered the Ravenna School of Mosaics, the only one in the world now training artists in the Byzantine technique. There and then we looked into the secrets of the men who with tiny hammers cracked up slabs of glass, applied them to the drawn designs and wrought the marvels of mosaic iconography.

Further enrichment of our understanding of Early Christian symbols we found when, driving three miles towards the sea between intensively cultivated farms reclaimed from marshes, we came to Sant' Apollinare in Classe, ancient naval base of imperial Rome. Here are massive stone sarcophagi of notables who lived in the Fifth, Sixth and Eighth Centuries at Ravenna. These, especially that of Archbishop Theodoric, display some of the finest series of Christian symbolism in the world. Lambs

carrying crosses; peacocks symbolic of renewed life; the Chi Rho; the date palm of victorious martyrdom; sacred birds of the spirit; vines with interwoven branches; serpents of wisdom; trees of life; lions indicative of Jesus as the Lion of the Tribe of Judah; St. John's four rivers of life—all are here. One of the finest, with its Byzantine crosses and elegant peacocks among fruitful grapevines, is that of the Seventh Century archbishop Theodore. And in the half-dome of the apse above a flowery meadow where the sheep (apostles) graze, is a tremendous mosaic cross resting on a ground spangled with golden stars and jewels.

About one century before the Ravenna artists were adorning her Fifth Century churches, other mosaic workers were pressing into place in a little basilica along the murmuring Sea of Galilee at the base of the Mount of Beatitudes, mosaics which in 1932 were brought back to the light of day from under a covering of sand where they had lain since the Persian invasion of 614 or some other destructive incursion. There at Tabgha, on a supposed site of Christ's miraculous feeding of the Multitude, a portion of floor and apse has been scientifically cleansed and protected by the erection of a simple basilica over these rare gems of iconographic art constructed prior to 386 A.D., when a lady pilgrim, Etheria, from Galicia in Spain, saw them and recorded them in her diary. We were delighted to see here lively depictions of the animals and flowers of the marshland along the Sea which Jesus loved—herons, geese, flamingoes, reeds, lilies and lotus. And in the apse beyond the altar, the most famous mosaic fragment, a tall basket containing five round flat loaves of Syrian bread, each bearing a small square cross. On each side of the symbolic basket is a fish, "Ichthus," standing on its tail. Thus at the eastern end of the

Mediterranean, the same symbols were being used as in the Catacombs of Rome at about the same period.

The archæologist to whom we talked at Tabgha Basilica while he was still uncovering the treasured mosaics, believed that these rare designs were made by experts in their craft, residents of the Syrian coast where Græco-Roman culture was still flickering. The warm love of life which characterized the Greeks they here carried over from paganism into the new-born faith through the medium of tiny, many-tinted cubes of Galilean limestone: blues, light and dark and violet; deep yellows, browns; white; pale greens, all merging with an intriguing harmony. What worship the Early Christian artists built into their ecclesiastical structures! And how miraculous, their preservation—aided in this instance by simple Arab Bedouin tenting nearby and guarding the sacred treasures under layers of sand from the Sea. Moslem though they are, they have an inkling of the sacred feeding of the bread of truth which took place here two thousand years ago. A truth which came startlingly to life for us as we emerged from the Basilica of the Loaves and Fishes and saw standing there, a handsome little Bedouin lad, his head covered with bronze-red ringlets blowing above his graceful ragged "abayeh." He was clutching in his chubby hand two small fish which his uncle, a modern Peter, had given him from the morning's brimming nets, and some small loaves for his lunch! Our "lad of the loaves and fishes."

One of the most appealing crosses in Ravenna we found at the end of a double row of 333 cypresses memorializing Italian soldiers blinded in the World War. It is a square or "Arian Cross," topping the Tomb of Theodoric the Ostrogoth who, arriving in 493 from the Danube basin, established himself as king of a strong East Gothic realm in Italy and applied his

wise, if illiterate, spirit to solving the problems of an oppressed people. His massive polygonal mausoleum topped by a flat dome of Istrian stone was built by his daughter Amalasuntha who became regent after his death in 526. It is adorned with Gallo-Germanic ornamentation and bears the stamp of this benevolent Christian "barbarian" Goth whose might went down before the approach of Justinian's conquering Belisarius. But his greater monument is the vast Arian Cathedral of Sant' Apollinare Nuovo whose amazing friezes we have already mentioned. And this, we recall, was ornamented with its golden mosaics almost forty years before Sancta Sophia was completed. Yet what are years, where centuries of art are concerned?

When you have lingered, as we have, amid the Byzantine elegance of worship at Constantinople, Ravenna and in San Marco, Venice, you may feel that you have looked upon the ultimate in what this imperial age contributed to iconography. We have traced it from its eastern infancy to its western maturity in the Mediterranean. The cross of Christ leaps over barriers of sea and mountain, links centuries and civilizations by the certainty of its life-giving power.

"In the cross of Christ I glory,
Towering o'er the wrecks of time.
All the light of sacred story
Gathers round its head sublime."
(John Bowring.)

Chapter Five

REJECTED BY RUSSIA

NO COUNTRY has ever been so eager to rid itself of crosses as the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Like Him whom these crosses symbolize, they are "despised and rejected of men." The fact that Jesus was known to be Comrade and Brother for centuries before the camaraderie of the Soviets was indoctrinated, means little to Soviet Russia. "The League of Militant Atheists" has been as happy to sell, as we to buy for American "valuta," eloquent examples of religious art worn smooth by the praying hands of worshippers.

Inasmuch as the Christian cross entered Russia in the hands of missionaries of the Orthodox Church from Constantinople, it is fitting that the story of our nineteen crosses, *rejected by Russia*, should follow our chapter on "The Beauty of the Byzantine" which developed in that queenly city along the Bosporus.

Finding ourselves in the U.S.S.R. several times in those years when "Torgsins" were operated in hotels and at the docks, we made it our practice to watch for crosses among the Russian bear skins, nests of wooden Easter eggs, Bokkara rugs, and Massandra wines. We came upon several fine specimens which were being offered at prices so low that they revealed the disesteem in which these sacred objects were held.

Usually they were lying in cases with a background of gor-

geous, cross-embazoned, brocaded copes and velvet chasubles, formerly used in the Russian Imperial Chapels and local churches. These vestments, remarkable examples of the art of hand-loomed, were, like the garments of Christ, being bargained for and divided among merchants seeking elegant fabrics for evening wraps and ladies' purses. The irony of those confiscated priestly robes brought to mind a scene described in the Gospel of John:

"The soldiers, therefore, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat . . . that the scripture might be fulfilled, which sayeth,

They parted my raiment among them,
And for my vesture did they cast lots."

The most historic of our Russian crosses is an enamelled "Romanov Cross" struck off in 1913 to commemorate the founding of the Romanov dynasty—that line of sometimes corrupt, but often able rulers; such as, Peter the Great, founder of St. Petersburg, "modernizer" of the old oriental Russia, and "pusher-through" to the Baltic where he gained a commercial foothold. It was Peter the Great who first brought the Orthodox Church under direct control of the government, a policy of questionable wisdom in any age.

Catherine the Great, too, was a Romanov, richly dispensing her patronage of French art and literature. Romanov, too, was her grandson, Alexander I, whose forces thwarted the advance of Napoleon on his ruinous advance toward Moscow. And poor "Little Nicky," who had, nevertheless, to his credit, opposition to persecution of the Jews, and the construction of the Trans-Siberian Railway, but conducted his country's part in the World War with such inefficiency and crass disregard for his soldiers' and people's best interests that the outside world was

little surprised when the Revolution forced his abdication. The Soviets, or councils of workers and soldiers, saw to it that the once-haughty imperial family of Nicholas II were imprisoned at Ekaterinburg, and finally shot in June of 1918 in the crude quarters where they had suffered brutal treatment at the hands of the Bolsheviks.

All iconographers are grateful to the Romanov dynasty, which, during the religious Seventeenth Century which was pushing the Pilgrim Fathers out from England to found a new-world freedom of worship, was designing beautiful crosses in the vast domains of Russia.

Our Romanov Cross was found by my mother while Lane was photographing Yalta's thermal establishments for workers worn out in the heavy industries. This type of cross was designed for the mystical, fatalistic Czar Nicholas II when he was celebrating in 1913 with pomp and circumstance the three hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Romanov dynasty, by Michael Feodorovitch, son of the patriarch Philaret, whose interest in ecclesiastical matters Michael carried over into his long reign of thirty-two years.

Little did Nicholas II dream, when arranging for the Romanov Cross as a part of the pompous celebration in honour of the first of his dynasty, that he himself would so soon become the last Czar of all Russia. By one of those sardonic circumstances of which history is full, the reverse side of the Romanov cross bears the inscription: "May God give our Czar a long reign. 1613-1913."

The obverse side of the Romanov cross is of white, red, and green enamel on which is outlined another simple Russian cross with the three characteristic transverse bars. The top one stands for the title board on which Pilot wrote, more truly than he knew, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews." The wider

bar is the one to which the Saviour's arms were nailed. And the short oblique one to which his feet were affixed is known as the "suppedaneum," wrenched from its original position by the writhing of Christ's agony or by the convulsion of the earth during the tragic Good Friday storm. A beautiful circle of immortality surrounding the intersection of the main cross-bar with the upright is decorated with two series of twelve dots in groups of three, indicative of Christ's Twelve Men and the Trinity. The Romanov cross is crowned with a high, pointed cap, resembling both an oriental turban lined with red, and the dome of the characteristic Russian church. Resting on top of the royal cap is a simple Greek cross.

In addition to our Romanov type of cross, we treasure two in our collection which actually belonged to members of the pious, if unsocially-minded imperial family. One of them is a fine Greek silver cross from the personal belongings of the Czarina Alexandra Feodorovna. The outlines of this Russian cross, dating from about 1750, imposed on a simple western cross, are traced on a base of silver bearing inscriptions in the old Slavonic, the language of ancient Russia, and the "IC—XC" (Jesus Christ, Son of God). The reverse bears a familiar prayer used in daily ritual and as an Easter anthem: "God will rise; His enemies will scatter; after beholding His face all-glorious and awesome they will run from His presence. God, keep evil away from the wearer of this cross."

Side by side with the Czarina's cross in our cabinet is a more highly treasured one from the personal collection of the lovely young Grand Duchess Tatiana, who shared my hobby of the cross with a notable collection of her own. Her spiritual, piquant face shines up at me on our desk in a reproduction of the famous pastel by Frederich Kaulbach, showing her in childhood—a captivating portrait of a godly child in any age.

This picture adorned the reception room of the Czarina in the Alexander Palace at Czärskoe Seló. And side by side with this happy portrait of her youth is a tragic companion-piece, a photograph of the mature Tatiana, standing with her overthrown imperial father, in crude homespun peasant blouse and skirt, at the gate of their prison in Ekaterinburg just before they faced the brutal execution squad. It is said that Tatiana alone of the murdered family, recovered consciousness for a moment, lifted her lovely head, and was beaten down again to death—a beautiful symbol of her longing for life and immortality.

Our cross which expresses the faith of the lovely Tatiana dates from the Seventeenth Century. Fragments of delicate green and blue enamel still adorn this fine piece of Russian art and set off the inner cross which rises out of a heart and rests upon a crown of thorns. Rising parallel to the upright of the cross are a tall spear and a rod bearing the sponge, reminding us of the ironic incident in the crucifixion of Jesus, when "one ran, and filling a sponge full of vinegar, put it on a reed, and" they "put it to his mouth. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up his spirit."

A larger and more beautifully enamelled cross of the same period as Tatiana's, we found one day, a half dozen years ago, in a "Torgsin" at Odessa. It, too, has an inner cross rising from a heart above the skull and crossbones, denoting the conquered sin of the original Adam. And the ends of the cross swell out into beautiful forms suggesting the turban-like domes of the oriental Russian churches. Hanging from a chain of silver, in whose links are carved tiny square crosses, alternating with lumps of topaz matrix, this Seventeenth Century Russian cross is a particularly beautiful piece of symbolic art.

No collection of Russian crosses would be complete without at least one icon. The word "icon," in fact, is the basis of "iconography," to whose study these pages are devoted. Although Greece and the Balkans have produced many historic icons, no land has specialized in this form of religious art quite as Russia has done. Her oriental love of the ornate led to the production of extremely elaborate icons by monk-craftsmen living in remote monasteries, toiling lovingly to paint on wood, representations of Christ, of the Madonna, of favourite Russian saints; such as, Nicholas, Dimitry, Peter, Ivan, and Alexis, or incidents from the Scripture. Secular artists, too, formed schools famous for their icons in Novgorod, Moscow, Pskov, and various smaller towns.

When the spoliation of churches occurred in Soviet Russia, it threw out of employment the families of artists who for generations had been making icons, following Græco-Byzantine designs, with inspiration also from Persia. The village of Palekh, two hundred miles east of Moscow, noted for centuries for its painted icons, resorted to making lacquered boxes on which the craftsmen now depict secular subjects; such as, flowery fields, or folk tales about sacks of buried rubles, or border-designs in flowing gold, based on Persian patterns.

The last of the Romanov czars himself had, in the Alexandrovsky Palace at Czárskoe Seló, a famous collection of icons dating from the Fifteenth Century and revealing the richest forms of Russian ornamentation. Even in the bathroom of his Livadia Palace at sunshiny Yalta, he kept an icon hanging, so the Soviets say, beside a picture of "the many-headed hydra of revolution," to remind himself of the dangers to which he was constantly exposed from the submerged classes to whose welfare this mild monarch was tragically indifferent.

But quite as impressive as this over-decorated devotional

piece are the simpler icons which hung in every rural church and peasant home—simple wooden panels about which the worship-life of the family centred with mystical devotion. For the icon was the most universal expression of the religious life of the Russian people before the Revolution.

The icon now in our own collection, we found one morning in the Crimea. We shall never know from what church it had been carried. Its old wooden panel bears a very simple, moving portrait of the face of our Saviour, a slender, refined, sensitive face framed with soft chestnut locks parted in the middle above a high forehead. The short, pointed beard, the delicate mouth, slender nose, large deep-set brown eyes suggest a living, kindly Man, the perfect Son of God, who once actually moved with stately power among the problems of his people. That beautiful olive countenance, so free from the stereotyped rigidity of Byzantine types, stirs us by its noble simplicity as it hangs on the wall of our Parsonage living-room beside a Persian prayer-rug. This beautiful face is framed in a simple foreground of hammered brass, whose design drapes the shoulders of Jesus with the soft folds of a Roman toga and shows him carrying in his arms the wave-washed world surmounted by a simple cross, the cross of his redeeming love for all mankind. The only elaborate feature of our icon is the sunburst of brass and brilliants which forms a crown-like nimbus or "glory" for this two hundred-year-old symbol out of the religious heart of the old imperial Russia.

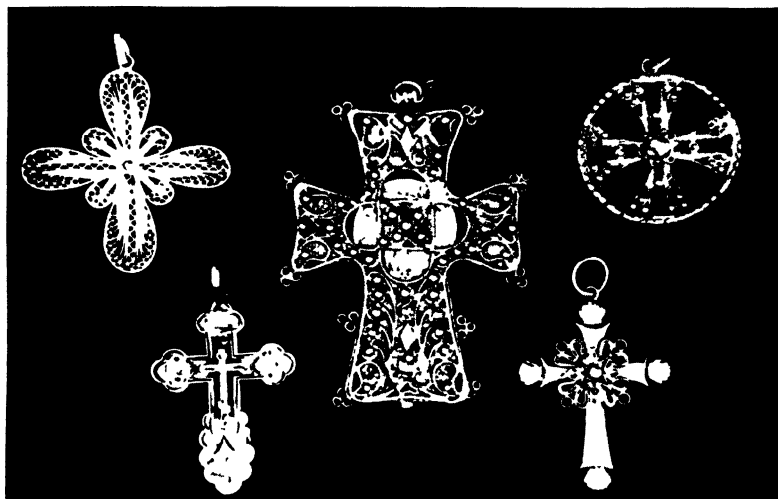
The fourth of our Russian crosses associated with the former aristocracy is an elegant solid gold one from the collection of the Princess Chadrinos in Moscow. It is from one of the many hordes of personal treasures thrust upon the markets of the world—Madison Avenue, New York—by exiled aristocrats subsequent to 1918. It is not of the Orthodox Russian type, but a

well-proportioned Latin cross with graceful trefoil ends. Its entire surface is embellished with delicately etched flowers. It looks now like a bit of fine old Spanish lace, again like an Armenian pattern with Persian influences. For it avoids all figure portrayals of the Christ. It carries no inscription, no sacred monograms. To us, its most distinguishing detail, as we first saw it that Christmas day when a friend came presenting her "find" for our collection, is a six-pointed golden star at the centre of the circle of immortality which bounds the intersection of the arms. And at the centre of the star, forever reminding us of the quest of the Magi who followed its heavenly original from fields afar, "o'er moor and mountain," a rose of Sharon blooms.

Something about this design reminds us that Armenian and Byzantine art came in to Russia upon the conversion of Vladimir in the latter part of the Tenth Century. Greek cities along the Euxine in Southern Russia probably had Christian worshippers prior to the Fourth Century. And scholars believe that this section of advancing Christendom sent two bishops in 325 A.D. to participate in the Council of Nicea, that first ecumenical gathering of Christendom which adopted the doctrine of the Trinity; passed on the standards by which orthodoxy should be tested; and helped to establish the state-church characteristic of Byzantine Christianity. But the conversion of Russia came several centuries later.

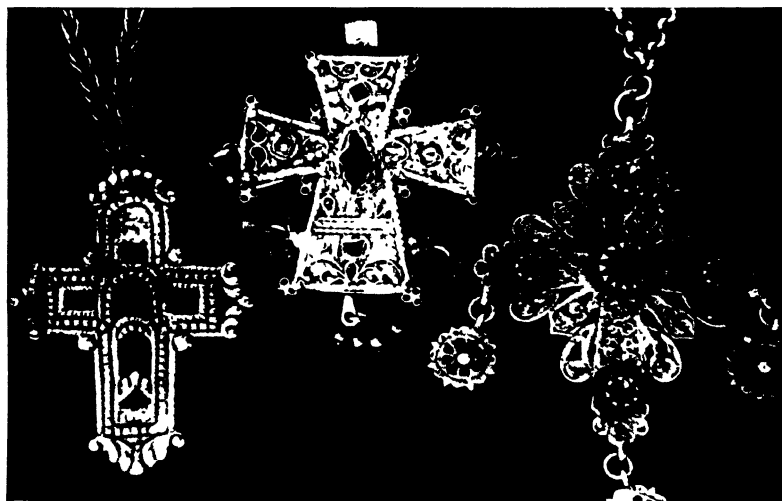
The story of the "Christianizing" of Slav Russia is fraught with as lively dramatic details as any Russian folk tale. Late in the Tenth Century there was born a son who became Vladimir, grand duke and founder of Kiev, present capital of the Russian Ukraine. This polygamous pagan warrior, Vladimir, who conquered city after city in Galicia, sailed down Russian rivers to conquer Bulgaria, erected new heathen shrines and

PLATE FIVE



FIVE BALKAN CROSSES CORINTHIAN, JUGOSLAV, ROMANIAN

See text, pages 93, 96 and 97



THREE RUGGED BALKAN CROSSES BULGARIAN, HERZEGOVINIAN, ATHINIAN

See text, pages 89, 91 and 101

put to death those who were already practising Christianity in secret, spent his leisure in revelry. Following a suggestion from his court advisers, he in 987 sent delegations to look into the religions of the nations surrounding him. An old chronicle tells how these men brought back an adverse report from the Moslem Bulgarians along the Volga River, "because they found in them no spirit of joy," but only "sorrow and a great stench." The heavy temples of the Germanic tribes left them cold, because they found no beauty there. But when they stood beneath the miraculous dome of Sancta Sophia, capital of Byzantine Christianity at Constantinople, they were spellbound by its architecture and its service of worship, participated in by ten bishops, eight hundred priests, a choir of two hundred men and women and two hundred boys, with an orchestra of three hundred playing harps, mandolins, zithers, and dulcimers. The whole impression so thrilled the emissaries from pagan Russia that they won Vladimir over to a desire for baptism into a faith that could produce such heavenly beauty. So at Kherson in the Crimea, not far from the Yalta church we have described above, in 988 Vladimir was baptized and an immediate baptism of his people followed. Missionaries from Constantinople followed up the task with zeal, as we have said above.

When "New Rome," as well as "Old Rome," on the Tiber had fallen the Czar of Russia assumed the position of defender of all Christians who professed the "only true faith," the Greek Orthodox. Peter the Great placed the government in control of the Russian state church which endured as the state religion until the fall of the Romanovs, having had a thousand years of history. The last of the Romanov dynasty, Nicholas II, was also the last head of the Orthodox Church in Russia. Kiev, called to-day "The Children's City," because of the youth wel-

fare projects proudly pursued there by the Soviet, takes its name from the converted warrior who, it is well said, both "Christianized and civilized" the vast domains of mountain and plain. Kiev retains many evidences of the old city which ten centuries ago so capitvated the Byzantines because of its wealth and superb location on the bluffs above the Dnieper River, that they called it a "second Constantinople." Modern travellers are shown "Vladimir Hill" where a statue of Prince Vladimir has been allowed to remain, even though the Soviet has "converted" Vladimir Cathedral into a museum of sacred art. The Byzantine Christian symbolism of the golden age which spread from the Bosphorus up to the Dnieper a thousand years ago, is still seen in Kiev's "Sophia Cathedral" with its amazingly preserved mosaics and elegant architecture, combining features of Syrian, Byzantine, Persian and Roman influences. And in the Kiev-Pechersk Monastery, which has been allowed to remain unmarred, is an outstanding example of Middle Age Slavonic architecture. The Kiev Catacombs, below the "Museum Town," are caverns whose peculiar soil preserved and mummified bodies of the monks whose graves became places of pilgrimage used for centuries.

From the point of view of craftsmanship, the finest of our Russian crosses is a slender wooden crucifix about twelve inches long, of fine smooth wood, overlaid with plaster on which the painted design is applied. This perfect specimen of Eastern Orthodox cross with its two parallel bars, denoting Christ's ministry to Gentiles and Jews, and the oblique bar to which his feet were nailed, is overlaid with solid gold leaf whose rich tones have grown more mellow with the centuries since they were made. Superimposed on the gold background, a simple wooden cross is painted, and to it, affixed a slender, crucified Jesus, wrought by an artist capable of delineating

skilfully his idea of the Saviour. He has nimbed him with a golden aureole, bearing on its square cross the Russian letters for "Alpha and Omega," the beginning and the end. Right and left of this "inhabited cross" are the busts of the weeping mother and the sympathizing friend, John, while above the title board rises from a bank of clouds, the conventional portrayal of the Father with arms extended in benediction, above a dove denoting the third Person of the Trinity and two well-wrought cherubim kneeling in adoration.

A distinctive feature of this valuable crucifix is the representation of Mediæval Jerusalem on the oblique "suppedaneum." The city walls and romantic towers show the interest of the artist in the architecture of the Middle Ages and lift the whole design above the depressing, rocky Calvary on which the cross is seen to rest, its skull depicting Golgotha and death.

One of our most appreciated Russian crosses is the simplest imaginable. Just a hand-carved piece of olive wood which grew on the sunny slopes of the Crimea. It was carved into a Greek cross with trefoil ends, by an old man whom we saw one day sitting in the portico of an elaborately-domed church in beautiful cypress-trimmed Yalta on the Black Sea. Its door ajar suggested that here was a place still used for the worship of God. So we walked through its once-lovely garden, whose broken palm trees and weedy rose-bushes and rain-strewn gravel paths looked as if no one had expended money or care upon them since they were last groomed for the summer visit by the family of the Czar vacationing in nearby Livadia Palace. At the half-open door sat an old man with a broad Slavic face, pock-marked, and heavily-bearded. He was mending shoes, trying to get one whole pair out of three. Seeing our interest, he asked in a kindly tone, "Amerikanski?"

Upon our nod of assent, he rose and escorted us inside the

church. He was its priest. Ragged and impoverished, he still tended the fires of faith. His cot was here, for he had no other home. Nothing had been changed within. Elaborate brass icons were intact. On one altar, near a painting of St. Nicholas, patron of Czar Nicholas II, was a vase of fresh Crimean flowers. The red carpet was badly stained by candle grease. Panes of glass were missing. But if there had been no money for repairs, at least there had been no desecration. People could come here, when they wished, to pray.

As we grasped the hand of the tragic, hungry old Yalta priest and were about to leave, we saw near the door of the church, for sale among tall wax tapers, one little hand-carved trefoil cross of olive wood. Eagerly we took it up in return for some eagerly accepted American "valuta," which would buy bread for the guardian of the sanctuary for days to come.

The situation of this one impoverished priest and his neglected church summed up for us the present state of the church in all of the U.S.S.R. The hostility of the Soviet toward religion was proclaimed from the beginning of their regime, when they required that all party members renounce religion openly. The Russian Orthodox churches which had been heavily subsidized by the government were deprived of all their state revenues and shorn of their participation in the registration of marriages, births, and deaths.

A few other Russian crosses of considerable age enrich our collection. One silver one of the western type is carved with the eastern three-barred cross, set amid prayers in the Russian tongue. It is pleasingly ornamented with spear points at its centre and stout round knobs of silver at every available point. Another of our Russian crosses has been so long used for worship that the ring from which it was suspended is worn entirely through. Still another, a square cross of gorgeous deep-blue

Russian enamel, is outlined against a floriated background of brilliants, studded with a ruby-red stone and four large sapphire blue ones, clearly a badge of honour with which some forgotten hero was decorated for arduous efforts. In great contrast to this flamboyant cross is an exquisitely simple one, cut from a single piece of flawless, cold Russian crystal, which was once a fragment of some glistening mountain recess in a land rich in untapped minerals. This transparent crystal cross with its polygonal sides always reminds us that the Greek word from which "crystal" is derived, means "clear ice."

In heavy contrast to the delicacy of this cross is a green-brown bronze one of which its seller could tell us nothing, except that "it was for long, underground." Its price led us to believe that it is older than our silver ones. At its centre is carved the robed figure of St. Nicholas surrounded by four colleagues, a good example of what is known as an "inhabited cross." This may date from the sixteen hundreds or earlier.

It is not surprising that our Palestine Jericho cross has a Russian cross as the basis of its design, for in Palestine the Russian Church, prior to the World War, had large holdings, dating from the time of Nicholas I, who in 1852 secured from the Ottoman government at Constantinople the privilege of "protecting" the rights of Orthodox Christians in the Holy Places—a privilege which, through the trivial argument about the custody of fifteen silver lamps kept burning by Latins, Orthodox, and Armenians near the traditional birthplace of Jesus in the cave on Bethlehem hill, caused the outbreak in 1854 of the Crimean War, beginning with a contest between Russia and France. For to Louis XV the Sultan Mahmud I had in 1740 assigned protection, not only of French, but of all Christian citizens visiting Palestine. The rivalry produced a drama of power politics into which England, as in the crisis of 1939, was

inevitably drawn. The question of "status quo" in worship privileges on sites associated with the land of our Saviour's birth, ministry, and death, became submerged under the struggle between England, France, and Turkey who combined against Russia in a contest for the Danubian principalities; control of the strategic Dardanelles; the admission of Turkey to the family of European powers; and the prevention of Russia's gaining Constantinople, and control of the route to India. Sounds like a chapter from current "power-politics!"

The humbling of Nicholas I at Sevastopol was a dark day for the Romanov dynasty. But from the bloody Crimean struggle there emerged a glorious heroine, Florence Nightingale, who in the vermin-infested barracks at Scutari opposite Constantinople, with her staff of forty English nurses, founded the modern profession of healers of broken men and women. The Red Cross, with the square ruby-colored emblem of life-giving compassion emblazoned on a pure white ground, had not yet been organized. Ten years later, in 1864, at Geneva, the International Red Cross was founded. Not until the sacrificial efforts of another wonderful woman, Clara Barton of New York, were poured into the care of men wounded in the Franco-Prussian War of 1871, for which she received both the Iron Cross from the German Emperor and the undying gratitude of the sick poor relieved in both Paris and Strassburg, did sentiment in the United States rally to the formation of an American branch of the International Red Cross. Only after Miss Barton returned from the war and worked for eight more years in an effort to bring about this new legion of mercy, did our country enter the organization established at Geneva.

The red cross of mercy, so truly a descendant of the restorative cross of the Great Physician who healed by Galilee, has never been more beautifully appraised than by Dr. John H.

Finley, editor of the "New York Times," in his poem written during the World War of 1914:

THE RED CROSS SPIRIT SPEAKS

"Wherever war, with its red woes,
Or flood, or fire, or famine goes,
 There, too, go I;
If earth in any quarter quakes
Or pestilence its ravage makes,
 Thither I fly.

I go wherever men may dare,
I go wherever woman's care
 And love can live,
Wherever strength and skill can bring
Surcease to human suffering,
 Or solace give.

I helped upon Haldora's shore;
With Hospitaller Knights I bore
 The first red cross;
I was the Lady of the Lamp;
I saw in Solferino's camp
 The crimson loss.

I am your pennies and your pounds;
I am your bodies on their rounds
 Of pain afar;
I am *you*, doing what you would
If you were only where you could—
 Your avatar."

(By permission.)

And can we forget that amid the roaring congestion of Trafalgar Square, London, the monument to Nurse Edith Cavell, shot during the World War for her efforts on behalf of escap-

ing wounded soldiers, terminates in a tall white granite cross, the upper arm of which is formed by the figure of a veiled nurse, laying on the transverse beam a little child whom she is sheltering by the folds of her cape, emblazoned with a square cross? Below the statue of Nurse Cavell at the foot of the symbolic cross are her last words, spoken to the chaplain just before she faced the firing squad that October dawn in Brussels, 1915, words which are the echo of God's eternal love that went to the cross on Calvary to save all men: "Patriotism is not enough . . . I must have no hatred or bitterness for anyone."

Chapter Six

RUGGED BALKAN CROSSES

WE HAVE already described in Chapter One the two Greek crosses which became the foundation of our collection. Since then we have added a number of Balkan specimens which are eloquent of the robust, colorful qualities of the people of many races and shades of belief who inhabit the pivotal peninsula jutting out from southeastern Europe into the Adriatic, Black and Ægean Seas.

There is a stolid, substantial beauty about our Balkan crosses suggestive of the mighty mountains and onrushing rivers which build up the backbone and water the sunny valleys of vines, roses and grain tended by people whose boundary lines have been fluctuating ever since the days of Philip of Macedon. The Rhodope and the Balkan Mountains of Bulgaria which gave their name to the entire section comprising Greece, Jugoslavia, Bulgaria and Rumania; the Carpathians and Transylvanian Alps of Rumania; the Grammas summits of old Serbia; the detached and purpler, "god-inhabited" mountains of Greece—these induced isolation of the sturdy people living there and led them to develop as diversified forms of religious art as of modes of political thought.

For just as Palestine and Syria were the landbridge over which the tramping feet of conquerors fought their way west and north and south, depositing their religions, their cultures

and their problems along with their armies of occupation, so, too, have the Balkans been on the route of those who advanced to their restless conquest, uprooting contented tillers of the earth and builders of noble cities. Greeks, Romans, Byzantine emperors, wild tribes of Avars and Huns out of the steppes of central Europe, Russians, Turks, all levied their toll on life. Therefore, the iconography of the Balkans is particularly diversified and rich. For as oppression came, the compensating forces of religion operated. The crosses and icons of Christendom found in ancient monasteries perched on peaks of mountain fastnesses are as pleasing to behold as the peasant crosses for sale in the towns. All are marked by a sincere integrity of hand-wrought design. The picturesque peasant art-ways of the Balkan people always present travel-contrasts to the surprising modernity of her cities.

In the silversmiths' shops of modern Athens, not far from the famous little Byzantine Metropolitan church whose low square ground-plan, round cupolas and eastern crosses became the prototype of many Greek churches we saw elsewhere in the Balkans, we found many heavy silver crosses on chains, some of which were brought as gifts to the staff of the Patriarch of Athens by pilgrims from other lands where the Greek Orthodox Church flourishes. Needing ready cash, the recipients had placed them on the market.

One of these we bought one Monday morning when the shops began to open after their Sabbath of rest which is a strict part of Christian procedure in modern Greece. It bears on its ancient filigree foundation, the same conventional cabouchons and diamond shapes which decorate our Armenian cross from Jerusalem. It has no figures of Christ or saints, but a floriated crown studded with a green stone glorifying the Saviour's crown of thorns. Its most significant feature is a group of old

Turkish coins pendant from its three arms. This detail has been verified this very moment by the pious old Greek peanut man from Sparta who is selling savoury "pokes" under our study window as I am writing these words. I ran down to ask him. And between sales of his fragrant nuts to passing motorists and children en route to the Park, he interpreted the characteristics of the old crosses we had just brought from what he affectionately calls, "My country."

"Yes," he said, "these are Turkish coins on an Asia Minor cross. Somebody brought present, big priest, my church—Athens. See, long heavy chain, priest he wear it on black gown—long whiskers—high black hat, my country."

These coins from the old Ottoman Turkey are not only decorative, but are a parable of the power for Christian work which always flows with energizing effect when someone's money is put in contact with the sacrificial cross of Christ, that Christ who said to a rich young ruler, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God . . . go, sell that which thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven."

The other Greek cross we found that Monday morning in Athens appears to have come from the island of Crete—home of superb Ægean art in the Minoan period four thousand years ago. This is but an inexpensive metal cross a few generations old. It has the same intersecting spear points and blue, red and green gems of our first Athenian cross. But instead of having tiny pendant crosses from its arms, or coins, it has wheel shaped disks—in which we like to see the symbolism of the onswEEPing progress of the Kingdom of God when it is given impetus by believers.

Another Athenian specimen which we possess but do not own is one shown us by a young archæologist on the staff of

the American School of Classical Studies, which has for many years been doing a magnificent work digging up the market place of ancient Athens, at tremendous cost of money from American sources and of patient research by Dr. Leslie Shear and his American scholars. We had just been walking in the steps of Paul in the Agora below the Theseum Temple. And had been looking at the Great Drain from the era of Peisistratus, the extensive "Stoa" or shops and the Tholos where the wealthy Greek senators dined. After passing the "Altar of the Twelve Gods," we enquired of the Princeton scholar whether any vestige of early Christian crosses had turned up.

"I have seen only one," he replied. "If you will come over to our little Museum on the edge of the dig, where we preserve and classify the graceful Attic drinking cups, the standard weights and measures, and the lovely statuettes of Diana we have just found, I'll show it to you. And you may also enjoy seeing the actual ostracon on which someone scratched his vote against "Aristides the Just," in 483 B.C.—simply because he grew tired of hearing him called "The Just." "

Taking us to his dusty but fascinating laboratory where he had been photographing and recording new finds, he opened a tall chest of thin drawers where priceless, eloquent "trifles" lay. From a drawer he lifted a large round plate of red clay.

"Notice its design?" he invited. "It shows a religious young man, an acolyte, lifting aloft a cross of early Byzantine type. We assign this to about the Fourth Century after Christ. It is therefore close to the time of Constantine."

Other gleaming crosses we found built into the mosaics of the famous Monastery of Daphni, along the Sacred Way west from Athens to Eleusis and Corinth. The iconography of Daphni ranks high in the history of sacred mosaics. The face of its wide-eyed, victorious Byzantine Christ looked down at

us one day from the dome of that little Church. Lane placing his camera on the ancient floor, secured a photograph of this living cross-nimbed Christos.

A more beautiful Daphni mosaic portrayal of Christ triumphant we saw in the extensive Eleventh Century wall mosaics—for Byzantines abhorred empty spaces and filled every available nook with figures or conventional designs. Here we saw Jesus riding into Jerusalem on a white colt. His garments are a rich dull green. Rose robes have been placed under Him on the little brown colt, with other colourful garments strewn under His feet by children. Jerusalem's walls loom in mellow ivory against a background of gold mosaics. Around the head of Jesus is a cross-bearing nimbus. Byzantine crosses are carved on fallen fragments in this quaint monastery church—small in size, as are most Byzantine churches, because congregations stand to worship.

Our most substantial-looking Balkan crosses are from the Dalmatian coastal strip of Yugoslavia, where the luxuriant mountains drop sheer to the Adriatic and leave a succession of colourful, folky towns whose Christian faith is rooted in the Second Century heroes of the faith. For the Dalmatian city of Split, the ancient Spalato or Salona, may have been a Christian centre as early as that—strange anomaly in view of the fact that this city was the birthplace, as well as the last residence, of the notorious tyrant Emperor Diocletian, persecutor of early Christians in whose united community he fancied that he saw a rival to his own authority at Rome—he whose palace at Split spread over so tremendous an area that to-day its remnants house, in one way or another, three thousand Christian people. Some of the royal ruins of the "oriental despot" (284-305 A.D.) are foundations of Yugoslav churches to-day. Just as a mixed company of founders set up the early settlements at Dubrovnik

—Illyrian fishermen, Latins, Slavs and also certain Greeks who had come in the middle of the Seventh Century A.D. bringing their Christian religion and symbols with them—so to-day we see in Dubrovnik (Ragusa) a confusion of religious loyalties which sometimes becomes an open conflict between the eastern and western bodies of Christendom. However, as soon as we set foot in this most interesting of small Adriatic cities, one which for a thousand years maintained proud independence as a mercantile republic after the manner of its Italian neighbour, Venice, we detected that its chief influence is Latin. Its one long principal street, the "Stradun," running inside the romantic Mediæval walls punctuated with the bold Minceta and Bokar towers, is dominated at the west end near the Pile Gate, by the Franciscan Monastery with its "oldest pharmacy in Europe," and at its east end, near the Ploce Gate, by the Dominican Monastery. But neither of these western churches, nor the unattractive baroque "Gospa" (Cathedral) or the Church of the patron saint, Blaise, reveals anything of the typical Balkan architecture we have seen in the Byzantine churches of Rumania and Bulgaria.

There are as many varieties of peasant crosses in Ragusa as head-gears in her picturesque market place. Many of them are treasured heirlooms. They are indeed expressive of the rugged Balkan beauty amid which we found them. In that folkly town of Dubrovnik they loomed invitingly in a tiny shop in the immaculate thoroughfare, the wide "Stradun" snug within the tan-grey wall which runs up the hill from the Adriatic. Both crosses are possibly a hundred years old. The small one is of silver, studded with red and blue and green stones suggestive of the gay peasant embroideries on Balkan jackets and dresses hanging all along the left side of the "Stradun." It has dangling pendants similar to the Coptic ostrich eggs and

is marked by a beauty of tapering line toward its centre. The larger cross, whose silver has been gilded by a rich tint of yellow gold, shows a stubbiness of proportion as substantial as the white-kerchiefed peasants we watched selling red leather belts, baby dresses, chickens and melons in the market. Its surface is delicately embossed with conventionalized leaves of life and other "Persian" details. There is no figure of Christ, as on a crucifix, but through open carved work at the centre of the cross peers a coin on one face of which are Mary and the Child and on the other the crucified Lord. Its maker, like the Armenians, disliked pictorial representations. Remembering the words of the aged John, "My little children, guard yourselves from idols," they clung to the formal scroll and vine design.

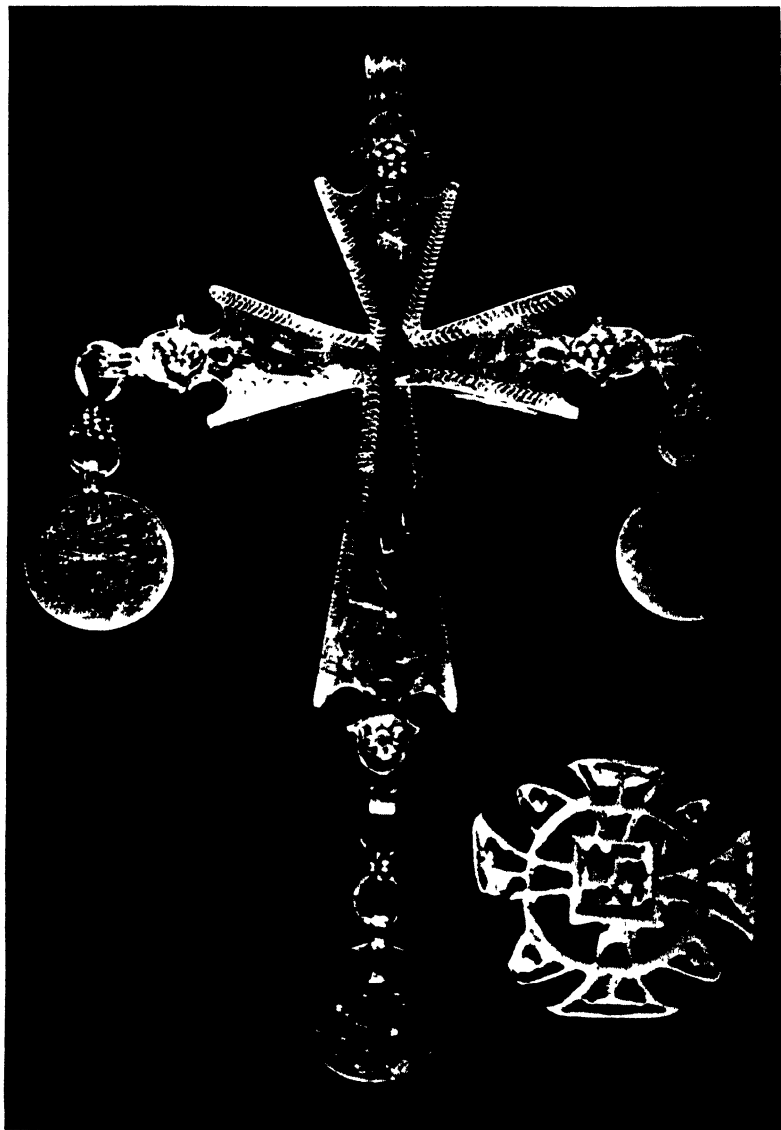
However, what Dubrovnik lacks in religious architecture is made up by the substantial Balkan beauty of her peasant crosses, worn by the broad-faced, haughty, self sufficient, well-fed, rotund, young women who refuse to let their photographs be taken, as they walk to church, or visit the ancient harbour, or weigh out their beans and tomatoes for their stout-stockinged husbands to deliver to customers—modern successors of those thrifty merchant patricians of Dubrovnik.

Our most beautiful Yugoslav cross is an almost square one, with its arms tapering toward the centre with the corners skilfully filled in by four spearpoints worked into the design of a circle or crown. The refined filigree tracery of scrolls and tiny diagonal figures, the flower at its very centre, adorned with a ruby-red jewel contrasting with its other jewels of Byzantine blue and green, give it like our Greek crosses from Athens, a distinct kinship to the Persian-influenced Middle East. This lovely Yugoslav cross, almost three inches square, had drifted into one of the dark little jeweller's shops tucked in among bazaars specializing in gay leather bags and knitted red slip-

pers. It came from the Herzegovinian town of Mostar on the Neretva River, which enters the Adriatic at Dubrovnik. We were glad that some circumstance floated this squatty, substantial peasant cross down the ancient waterway from Mostar, lying between Sarajevo of World-War destiny and Dubrovnik.

Yet we admire, also, our two elaborate specimens which express Slavic piety in fine-spun filigree, studded with dainty silver bead work and small cabouchons. One of these, bearing no figures, but entirely conventional patterns, has at its centre a hinged amulet in the form of a Latin cross, lined with bright red cloth peering out from under the overlaid filigree work. The other cross, incorporating a Latin depiction of the crucified Jesus between spearpoints, appears to be from the lovely little town of Herzegovinia, a most folky Dalmatian town snuggling on the south shore of the fjord Boka Kotorska, where its small homes set amid pencil cypresses, look as if the encroaching Black Mountains of Montenegro would push them into the quiet waters of the Bay whose peaceful atmosphere contrasts with the submarines and aircraft housed in this strategic Adriatic fjord.

One year in Dubrovnik, we came upon an irresistible little solid gold cross whose owner was willing to part with it for just the price of its high-karat yellow gold weighed on his jeweller's scale. He cared less than we, for the finely-wrought work of its designer, who had carved at the four ends of this loveliest of our Ragusan crosses, four delicate scallop shells, symbols of the religious pilgrim. How fitting, that we should add it to our collection in the Illyrian Dalmatia of wayfaring merchant princes and adventuring knights who, like Richard the Lion Hearted, were wrecked here en route home from the Holy Places of Palestine. We had long wanted a cross decorated with the pilgrim shell and now here it was. We had often seen



ALIPPO CROSS WITH PENDANT COINS NESTORIAN CROSS, CHINA

See text, pages 105 and 106

that beautiful scallop shell in our wanderings around the Mediterranean shores—on facades of the knights' homes in Rhodes, on palace walls near Palermo's Porta Reale in Sicily of the Norman kings. Used in Early Christian symbolism to indicate James the Greater, brother of Jesus who many a time along the shores of the Sea of Galilee had taken up dripping shells in his nets along with the fish whose catching he forsook to follow Jesus, the shell was later used on the cloak, the armour or the pennons of those who had been pilgrims to the land of the divine Fisherman of souls. Sometimes an actual scallop shell was stuck in the hat of the pilgrim returning home with joy that at last his vows were fulfilled. Again, in a more figurative sense, the scallop shell decorated the spirit of the pilgrim, who, as the poet Southey charmingly expressed his mood, exclaimed:

"Give me my scallop-shell of quiet,
My staff of faith to walk upon,
My scrip of joy, immortal diet,
My bottle of salvation,
My gown of glory, hope's time gauge,
And thus I'll make my pilgrimage."

What could be more welcome to a satisfied, weary traveller, than to float away on "a scallop shell of quiet?"

Of Rumanian crosses, we have only one type, a small one of blue enamel on silver, carrying on its trefoil ends, the Greek letters, IC-XC (Jesus Christ, Son of God). It still bears the ribbon of Rumanian national colours, red, yellow, blue, by which it was hanging from the shopkeeper's wall when Lane bought it.

This simple Balkan cross suggests the more elaborate icons we saw on a privileged visit to the Cotroceni Palace of the late Queen Marie in Bucharest. This remarkable woman had her private sitting-room done in the style of a peasant cottage,

that style whose textiles and ceramics she did so much to revive for the benefit of her people after the World War. As we looked at the icons beside her couch, and at the small Greek cross beside her bed, we remembered that her mother was a Russian Grand Duchess and that Marie came by her taste for crosses quite naturally, even though she was granddaughter of Queen Victoria. She visited Moscow often as a child, with her mother, and remembered those occasions when, in maturity, she contemplated the Russian crucifix which we saw by her tremendous fireplace in the royal palace.

The most prevalent cross we saw in the Rumanian churches, which are very similar in style to the round-arched Orthodox churches of Russia and Greece, with their "crinkled" cupolas, is a square cross crosslet. In fact, the one we recall seeing on the palace of the Metropolitan of Bucharest has its intersecting arms crossed and re-crossed so many times that it looks like an aggregation of plus signs. The cross crosslet tops the amazing wooden steeple of the famous wooden church of Maramuresh with its double roofs beetling down like mountain avalanches over its low first story. So, too, it tops the polygonal cupolas of the stately little Byzantine "Mitropolia" or "Episcopia," the state church adjacent to the Chamber of Deputies, scene of state ceremonies of worship.

This head church of the Rumanian people is so adorned without and within that it is really an elaborate jewel box. Its crosses spring from the crescent moon found under many Russian crosses, with chains swinging from the crossbars. Its facade is a feast for the iconographer, for it is paved with a series of painted icons in rows; and its front portico carries a fresco, quaintly showing a small weeping Judas sitting on the arm of Satan, who clutches the money bag behind Judas' back so that he cannot see it. Here is the iconography of greed.

But whether on simple Rumanian village churches, or in those of cities in the various sections of her diversified peoples—Moldavians, Transylvanians, Bessarabians—the cross of Rumania is everywhere. Bessarabians weave it into their carpets, Transylvanians put their icon of St. George on glass; Oltenians weave it into their aprons and napkins embroidered in wool and gold. The poorest peasant, or the most cultured Rumanian physician, adorns his walls with icons and crosses. Although modern Rumania boasts of a Roman soul—her Pavilion at the World's Fair in New York had a bas-relief inscribed "Our ancestors, the Romans"—and carves Romulus and the mother-wolf near her centre of government in Bucharest, her soul looks toward the east and draws its art from Byzantium. Rumania like all the Balkan countries is debtor to Byzas the Greek of Megara, who in 600 B.C. led a company of fellow Greeks from that little town between Athens and Corinth, to the site where the Black Sea rushes into the Sea of Marmara. From the time of Constantine's arrival to establish Byzantium as capital of the Roman Empire, to its capture by Mohammed II, the rich art influences of Byzantium flowed in every direction, through Europe and the Mediterranean. Yet when we speak of Byzantine influence, we imply much that was of Greek origin.

Rumania has an independent state church and its head, attired in the long black robes, high hat and flowing veil is a personage of dignity and honour, wearing on his breast crosses of various types given him by admirers among the fourteen million baptized adherents of his faith, out of Rumania's population of eighteen millions.

As in Lithuania, the wayside wooden crosses or "prie Dieus" of Rumania reveal originality and sincere beauty. Devout peasants, who own ninety per cent of the land and comprise eighty per cent of the people, till rich wheat fields coveted by her

hungry western neighbours. They place wooden shrines at crossroads, or in the midst of their fields, flocks, and or near their whitewashed thatched cottages where they spend the long winter evenings—after nine months in the fields—carving while their wives embroider or spin or weave.

One day we were strolling through the little main square of the Rumanian oil port of Constanza on the Black Sea, near the statue of the Latin poet Ovid exiled to this "Dacian" shore in 8 A.D., a fact immortalized by John Masefield in his poem, "A Letter from Pontus." We were attracted by an out-door exhibit of oil paintings by Rumanian artists. The one to which we fell victim, we call our "Rumanian Angelus." For against a light-blue sky of spring which has just watered the sowed fields, a wayside cross is shown, with a little pointed roof protecting its painting of the crucifixion. Close by, is an icon of Mary. Beside these symbols which express his faith for the life-giving harvests, a smock-clad, sturdy Rumanian farmer stands absorbed in prayer. This peasant cross now hangs just inside the front door of our Parsonage, challenging all who enter to emulate the fine religious strivings of the Rumanian people who seek to express in such simple symbols as this, their search for what is eternal and essential. It represents the Balkan pattern of life at its best, quite as adequately as the pompous Stavropoleos Church in Bucharest, with its Arabo-Byzantine arches; or the Sixteenth Century cathedral of Curtea de Arges, whose triple-barred crosses, gilded cupolas, twisted towers and Moorish details suggest that its builders fabricated it from an oriental fairy tale, which would have been an acceptable interpretation to Queen Marie, whose burial place it has become.

Rumania with its Mediæval monasteries and robust, decorated churches, finds in the legendary beginning of its capital

a symbol of its long religious interest. The shepherd Bucur, leading his flocks to drink by the Dambovita, erected for his own meditation on that peaceful spot a little hut—as did Joseph of Arimathea with his hut of wattles from which Glastonbury Abbey developed. So, from the rustic shrine of Bucur the shepherd sprang the well-churched Bucharest with its rugged Balkan crosses.

During a recent visit to Bulgaria we acquired a cross which, when its owner told us that it was “Macedonian,” at once seemed to put us in touch with that indomitable pilgrim-apostle of the cross, Paul of Tarsus.

It was in the simple little seaside resort of Varna along the Black Sea, a settlement planted in 585 B.C. by Greeks who plied the hospitable Euxine in search of “Golden Fleece” and equally golden grain for their mountain-girt people. There at Varna, on the very edge of the province of the Dobruja which she lost to Rumania after the World War, we were prowling about in a dingy shop near the cathedral. The owner’s fine specimens of old Macedonian coins—for at one period, Bulgaria owned all of Macedonia—allured Lane more than the heavy silver Bulgarian belts and too-crude crosses and daggers attracted me. These made me agree with those who call the Macedonians “the toughest of Balkan peoples—born killers!” After selecting a delicate Greek cross for a friend who is interested in iconography, we were leaving the shop—Lane having “taken on” a pair of Macedonian coins, one stamped with the effigy of Philip and the other, the initial of Alexander his greater son, the good-natured, burly Bulgarian shopkeeper called us to come back to see a small cross. Its primitive silver encased a much older wooden cross, seen clearly when we turned it over and noticed its crudely carved Byzantine Christ, with head erect

and feet not crossed as in Latin crucifixes. Through the small round arches on the front of the silver cross, we saw a robed figure carved on the obverse of the wooden cross—an unrecognized Father of the Eastern Church. With what regret must the thrifty peasant-owner of this crude but dignified little cross have parted from it as she fondled it on its unusual chain of square silver mesh! It spoke to us of the great strides made by Philip of Macedon who, springing from the crudities of the Balkans in pre-Christian times, annexed Greek culture and spread through his son the Hellenic tradition as far as India.

Bulgaria obtained her independence very late—only in 1908, after five centuries of oppressive Turkish domination which squeezed taxes from hard working Christian peasants like the owner of our Macedonian cross. Long under the rule of the Patriarch of Constantinople, the Bulgarian Church in 1870 became an independent Bulgarian Exarchate which used its influence to develop political, as well as religious, independence.

On that day when we acquired our Bulgarian cross, we sat during a sunset hour of brilliant Balkan beauty in the cool park of the Casino above the beach which King Boris and his Italian Queen Johanna are proud to have for the enjoyment of their simple, hard-working people. As we were sipping Turkish coffee, a friendly woman, a foreigner like ourselves, asked if she might join us and talk about the interesting political developments of the hour. This was in August, 1938. A few hours before, we had heard the "town crier"—a soldier riding in an open carriage—clatter through the streets of Varna, announcing to the people who gathered about him, "Here is good news for Bulgaria!" Which good news proved to be, a "new loan from France"—at a high interest rate which would enable Bul-

garia to arm and overcome the handicap she had felt. It also involved a rapprochement with her Balkan neighbours.

"I am a Jewess from Prague," said our companion. "I feel great concern about the immediate future of my country, Czecho-Slovakia."

She was intuitively sensing the approaching disaster which came only six months later. Then she went on to chat about the Bulgars' being the best soldiers in Europe, because they live so "hardly," eat such simple food all the while. And to suggest that we drive out to the gypsy quarter on the edge of Varna, if we wanted to see living conditions at their "world's worst."

But I confess that none of these matters held our attention as we watched the gorgeous Balkan sunset shift its deep-torquoise to a delicate green sky above the blackening sea. The evening star which came trembling out to companion a crescent moon, somehow made us think of Paul and the simple Macedonian cross in our purse—Paul who long ago, after a dream in which he saw a man from Macedonia beckoning him to come over to help his people, crossed over from his native Asia Minor and brought the Christian faith into Europe for the first time:

"Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothrace and the day following to Neapolis; And from thence to Philippi, which is a city of Macedonia . . . and we were in that city abiding certain days."

That Macedonian city of Neapolis was modern Kavalla, which Bulgaria lost to Greece at the close of the World War.

We made up our minds that some day we would return to hunt more crosses in the interior of Bulgaria, with its famous old Byzantine churches and its monasteries hanging on to crags in fastnesses where artists carving their crosses and icons did not suffer the interruptions from warring invaders—places such as

Batchkovo Monastery with its Twelfth Century frescoes and mystical icons; or Byzantine Preslaw with its unique ceramics; or paintings in the rock-hewn Aledja Monastery with its origin dating from the earliest Christian centuries; or the Byzantine cathedral in the capital at Sophia, named from the Basilica of Sancta Sophia built by Justinian.

Rugged Balkan crosses! In lands whose political and social problems continue to crucify their substantial, hard-working peoples who yearn for peace, productive peace, peace which allows them to worship in security on their quiet Sundays and to go forth refreshed on the Mondays, into fields and factories or along their wooded rivers.

Chapter Seven

MOST ANCIENT OF ALL

IT IS strange how hobbies make friends of people who never meet. Such was the case with the circumstances by which we acquired one of the most unique and ancient of our crosses, a bronze Nestorian from the heart of China.

But first let us look at some Anatolian and Syrian crosses. For out of Syria, Nestorius went forth.

Asia Minor one summer yielded us two eloquent crosses. The old Anatolian one of time-worn silver has an outline of rare beauty, with flattened floriated ends giving grace to the arms of unequal length, studded with the favourite stones of the Easterner—ruby-red for sacrificial courage and blue for abiding faith. The traditional intersecting spearpoints have also been softened by floration. A stately design, devoid of graphic representation of a Saviour, saint, or idea. Its elegance, simple though it is, flashes our thoughts back to Ephesus where an elaborate pagan temple was erected to the lewd Diana against whom Paul protested within site of her shrine, to his own detriment. How different this chaste Asia Minor cross is from Diana's temple with precious gems and solid gold worked into its foundations! Side by side with it in our cabinet, lies another from Asia Minor. This is of hoary bronze and is surely one of the oldest in our collection, very primitive in workmanship. Possibly it is not of bronze, but of iron. For once iron was so

esteemed that gift rings were made of it. Its maker must have toiled hard to cut from the available metal, the central cross of Latin shape, from whose arms he hung three small Byzantine crosses, each bearing the imprint of the Saviour he was worshipping as he carved.

Syrian artists in Byzantine times excelled in making elaborate enamel crosses depicting scenes from the Bible; and fine silver plate for communion services, some of which made its way into Russia, traded in return for furs. Basins, censers, communion spoons, and chalices came out from a Syria which glorified the cross and always depicted a truly Syrian Christ, following their own folk-ways.

The school of Syrian symbology is represented in our collection by four very simple crosses. Two of them are from Aleppo in Northern Syria, east of Antioch, home of the first community called Christian. Like our "moneyed" cross from Athens, one of these Aleppo crosses carries pendant from its three arms, old Turkish coins, reminders of the burdensome sacrifice that all Christians in Aleppo felt when the heavy hand of Moslem taxes crashed down upon them. These coins, hanging from the large, simple Syrian cross, seem to say, "This much we rescued from the overlords to dedicate, O Christ, to thy service," even as Christians sacrifice to-day to glean something from their taxes and routine demands to share with the living Christ in his age-long program of redeeming the world. Perhaps the coins on their cross symbolize the thirty pieces of silver that crucified Christ.

Another of our Syrian crosses is in the form of a cheap little white enamel pennon, bearing a blue cross with a heart at the intersection of its arms. We accepted it because it was the only cross we could find to carry away with us from Byblos, that old Phoenician seaport which gave us our word, Bible. For

Byblos manufactured papyrus on which the first books were written. This little cross was found for us by a band of Byblos boys who were prowling about in the poorly-stocked bazaars below the square Donjon of the Crusaders' Mediæval castle, waiting for something exciting to turn up. How appropriate it would be for some American Bible classes to provide adequate means of religious education for these youngsters who live in the land of the Bible, at the birthplace of that word which has inspired millions! *Byblos*, where the Lebanons meet the Mediterranean.

One day in the Silversmiths' Bazaar of Damascus, which calls itself the world's oldest city with a continuous occupation, we began to inquire whether the long-robed, turbaned merchants had any Christian crosses. They were much better stocked with heavy Arab bracelets, jewelled necklaces, and earrings carved with Moslem conventionals. But as soon as we made our first enquiry the whole line of silversmiths, each in his tiny stall within the covered "sûk," learned what we were looking for and began to open up dusty cases looking for "antique crosses." In some instances they offered us subtle substitutes. But at one corner stall we found a genuine cross, its broad silver arms trimmed with scrolls of twisted rope designs and pleasing cabouchons. At its centre was a light blue stone, the shade used by Easterners "to keep the evil eye away," their theory being that the beholder of the stone is so attracted by its beauty that he fails to look at the object wearing it. From the three arms of that pleasing old Damascus cross hangs a favourite symbol of eastern Christianity, the conventionalized palm leaf or palm-ette. When we protested that this cross needed a chain and that none in the case matched its ancient tint, the merchant lighted his fining-pot and skilfully dipped the chain, "antiquing" it while we dallied about and fell victim to some of his neighbours'

Syrian bracelets. When we returned, the still-glowing utensil of this industry of the East which was flourishing in Old Testament times brought to mind the ancient Proverb of the land:

"The fining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold;
but the Lord trieth the hearts."

We wondered whether Paul, walking through these same old bazaars of Damascus and seeing the Silversmiths' "sûks" thought, too, of these lines.

The simplicity of our crosses from Syria is in line with the traditions of local art which parted from the Hellenistic trends. Syria early broke away from the Greek and turned to the art forms of the Middle East. Her first Christian artists borrowed Mesopotamia's formal designs based on animals and vegetables, acanthus leaves, palmettes. When they used human figures at all they resorted to the "inverted perspective," bringing out to the front of a wedge the most important figure, such as Christ bearing his cross, with the lesser characters shrinking back.

When the Syrians began to portray Christ on the cross they avoided the vivid manner in which the pagan Greeks depicted Pan of the woodlands, or the Olympic trinity Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva, as if they were on intimate terms with these inhabitants of Olympus. Syrian artists represented Christ with more reserve. They made him fully clothed. They swathed Mary amply, as the saintly Fra Angelico did centuries later in his Florentine madonnas at "San Marco" monastery. The Syrian Christ wore a long, soft beard and flowing locks parted above his noble forehead.

And something else came out of Syria besides religious art—something having much to do with our Nestorian cross and its strange story hinted in the opening lines of this chapter. But

what is the strange story of our Nestorian cross and the hobby-collection of which it was once a part in distant China?

A half dozen years ago a little article of mine, describing the first of our crosses, drifted across the world to a missionary in Peiping. The material appealed because he, too, had been collecting crosses and doing a piece of scholarly research, deciphering their mysterious symbols. Dr. Mark Brown saw his first Nestorian cross in a drawer of the typical "junk" which makes wayfaring in China an art-adventure. Curious, he tried to learn what it meant. In subsequent years he acquired five hundred specimens and had them all photographed and catalogued. Many of them he described in "The Chinese Recorder," intending to follow up this article with a sequel.

But the sequel was never written. Like many another missionary who has gone "into all the world" carrying the healing, illuminating cross of Christ, he laid down his life for the sake of the sheep. An epidemic of diphtheria took its toll. And his sacrificial career, as well as his persistent riding of a most scholarly hobby, was cut short. Not long before, he had sent us his first report on "The Romance of Nestorian Crosses" and when we saw its illustrations we were gripped by a desire to add one of these extraordinary bits of Christian symbolism to our collection. Students of iconography all over the world were intensely interested in them. It was growing very difficult to secure genuine specimens.

Through the co-operation of Dr. Brown and a member of my Brooklyn Bible Class, who was training nurses in a Chinese mission hospital, a Nestorian cross started on its long way from the East and narrowly escaped loss after it had passed through New York Customs. And speaking of customs—an even larger collection of Nestorian crosses has been gathered by a postal commissioner in China, Mr. F. A. Nixon, who has the world's

largest collection and will house it in some British museum when he retires to England.

But how did the Nestorian crosses get into China? And what do they look like?

Through the back door of this wide land they probably arrived by way of Mesopotamia, India, or Persia, carried in the hands of missionaries, or made through the influence of these heroic pioneers after their arrival. But who were the Nestorians?

Their unique story crystallizes the history of a Syrian "heresy," one of those many unfortunate schisms whose rending of the Christian East made this land of the cross an easy prey to united Moslem armies of the greatest rival Christianity has ever faced. Nestorius was a Syrian, educated at Antioch and elevated to the Patriarchate of Constantinople in 428 A.D. At first an oppressor of heretics, he himself was anathematized by the monophysite Cyril of Alexandria in 431 for his belief that God and Christ are not only two natures, but two persons. After his refusal to state before the Council of Ephesus that he believed Mary to be the "Mother of God," he was "unfrocked," compelled to withdraw to his monastery at Antioch, then banished. His followers withdrew to Nisibis near Ninevah in ancient Babylonia, and, breaking completely away from western Christendom, established a centre of learning which surpassed even Syrian Edessa two centuries later.

But many followers of Nestorius who had fled after the exile of their leader went much farther than they actually needed to. For they were determined to spread to the boundaries of their world, the truths for which their leader had been sacrificed. Sweeping into Central Asia, they went on to India, Ceylon, and Malabar, winning converts. In China they founded the

Nestorian Christian Church in 636 A.D. and won so many adherents that churches sprang up in even remote provinces.

But in 845 the Nestorians endured such violent persecution that when monks arrived from Baghdad on a visit in 985 they found almost no traces of the once large Christian group. Three centuries later, however, there was a renaissance of Nestorian faith, as recorded by the Thirteenth Century Venetian traveller and merchant, Marco Polo. As related in his famous narrative, dictated in a Genoese prison from little notebooks he had made in China, Polo says that he found so many Nestorians living side by side with Moslems, under the tolerance of the great Jenghiz Khan, that there were as many as three churches in one town; and in Tenduk, an eastern province, he found Christian rulers, with their Christian subjects earning their living by weaving the fine silks and gold tissues ornamented with pearl for which Chinese have always been noted. He reported that "Christian carpenters and smiths were able workmen." The great Jenghiz Khan gave his son in marriage to a Christian princess—in fact, Christian wives seem to have been preferred for royal sons. Perhaps they made better mothers, then, as now. The Christian wife of the soldier Hulagu saw to it that he had a Nestorian chapel attached to his camp—rather a foregleam, this, of the Christian General, Chiang Kai-Shek, and his pious, brilliant wife who pursued their daily devotions consistently through the horrible years of war to which their people were exposed in our time.

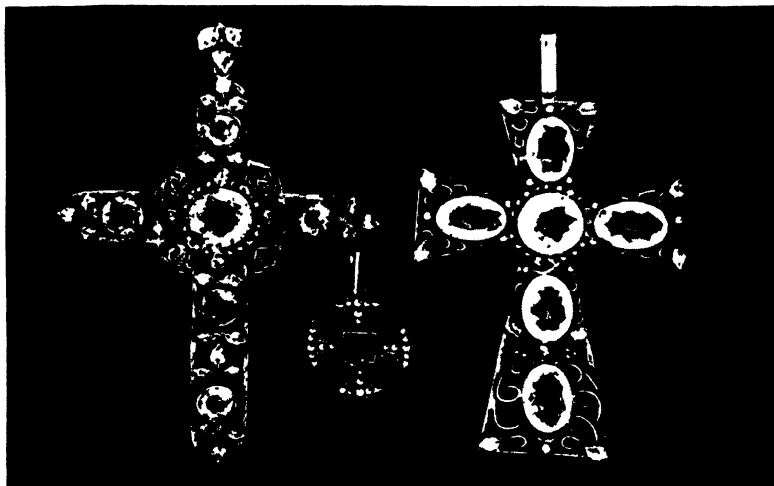
Nestorians usually forbade the use of the crucifix and representational art in their worship, using only the cross and portraits of Christ in their churches. In view of the gross idols worshipped by the pagan Chinese whom they hoped to win, this was a necessary strategy, as well as a part of their basic belief that the cross itself stands for Christ. When they looked

upon this, they thought of Christ himself, standing with outstretched arms upon the Mount of Ascension, an incarnation of the cross his first disciples had resented his bearing.

But what does our Nestorian cross look like? It is not related to any other in our collection. When we took it to the oriental expert at the American Museum of Natural History, he was baffled, saying, "Very ancient. I have never seen anything like it. I can say nothing about it."

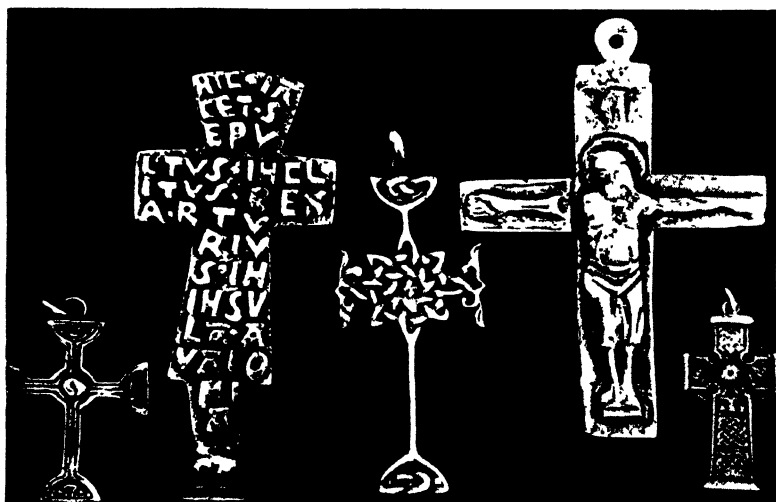
It is a square, open-worked Maltese type, about two inches square, of bronze which bears no evidence of ever having been underground in a tomb, like our Russian and Crusader bronze crosses. Rather it gives clear evidence of having been a "body cross," worn close to the heart of its owners, attached to a leather thong by a wide loop on its reverse side. So steadily was it worn, and for generations, that the bronze loop is thinned to a mere thread. It takes time to wear down a piece of bronze like this! In each of the widening arms of this nearly Maltese Nestorian cross is a conspicuous Greek letter T. Or perhaps it is a T-shaped cross, or "Tau," which has been used by many artists, even Rembrandt, for their depiction of the cross to which Christ was nailed. Each of these "T's" or T-shaped crosses rests upon a segment of a circle of immortality which bounds an inner cross with equal arms, tapering toward the centre. At the heart of this square central cross is an open square, enclosing a clear-cut swastika or "fylfot cross." The swastika occurs in many of the Nestorian crosses, and denotes, probably, as with the primitive Indo-Europeans who may have been the first to use it, "object of well-being." Perhaps this is why the swastika has decorated the art of almost every people from the Indus Valley to Persia, Asiatic Troy, and on to the Roman harbour of Ostia, where we have just recently seen it in the excavated mosaic floors. Into the new world it found its

PLATE SEVEN



ENGLISH CROSSES AMITHYST SILVERSMITH'S ART,
CANTERBURY, ST MARTIN'S

See text, pages 126, 128 and 130



CELTIC, KING ARTHUR'S, IONA, ROMSEY ABBEY

See text, pages 120, 125 and 132

way and was a favourite emblem in the bead work and pottery of the American Indians. The word swastika comes from the ancient Sanskrit.

Just as I came to this point in our manuscript, I stopped to run over to Manhattan to see other specimens from Dr. Mark Brown's amazing collection, now in charge of his sister, who graciously allowed me to see them. On these I saw many other obscure designs, crosses set on hills, anchors, sacred monograms, suggestions of chalices and stirrups, and of a lighthouse. Some have characters resembling Chinese characters, as the one for mountain. Yet Dr. Brown believed that these Nestorian crosses were not made in China, but were carried in from the West. Some of them are "camouflaged crosses" of the Early Christian Catacombs, the Ichthus or fish. Some consist of a pair of sacred birds, attached to a conventionalized fish, symbolizing the faithful, feeding on the body of the Saviour. Some of them strongly suggest crude efforts to hint at a crucifix by making the upper part of the cross in the form of a head and the transverse beams, the arms of the crucified one, and the lower part of the upright, his body. But this is rare, as Nestorians shunned the crucifix, as we have already said.

Most challenging to our imagination is the old bronze Nestorian cross on the desk beside me as I am writing. Whether it dates from the first large-scale planting of Nestorian Christianity in China, in the T'ang Dynasty in 635 A.D., or from the later period of the Mongol Dynasty of the Yuan (1280-1368), it makes me feel, every time I lift it up, just as Dr. Brown wrote that he felt: "It seems that I am holding in my hand one of the 'bones' of that vanished body of Nestorian Christians. I thrill with the thought of being in physical touch with the historic past, and my heart goes out to those simple, rugged

souls, into whose hard lives the possession of one of these crosses must have brought the solace of religion."

Nestorians persist to-day in India, Persia, and Malabar. Some thirty thousand "Assyrian Nestorians" live in the Mosul oil region of the new Arab kingdom of Iraq. They have proved to be a troublesome minority to the Arab government, for the Assyrian Patriarch, cultivating the favour of English prelates of the mandatory power, maintained an aloof non-co-operation with the Iraq officials. Arab leaders to-day are ashamed of the 1933 massacres of Assyrian Nestorians. We can well understand the problems of these Moslem leaders in dealing with minorities whose own destinies and loyalties are so confused, for a large part of the former Nestorian Christians in Baghdad are "Chaldeans," a sect which split off from the Nestorians in the Sixteenth Century and lined up their allegiance with the western Church at Rome. The "Patriarch of Babylon" is a Chaldean Christian.

The scholarly hobby of Dr. Mark Brown reminds us of other missionaries who, as respite from the tangled problems of their strenuous efforts on behalf of the cross in lands afar, have taken to scholarly research which has enriched the world. As, for example, the delving into Turkish literature by Dr. J. J. Birge of Constantinople, whose fine book has recently been published. And can we forget that the discovery near Lebanese Sidon, of the famous "Sarcophagus of Alexander" now in Istanbul Museum, whose carved splendour is known to artists everywhere, was due to a flare for archæology pursued by Dr. Eddy, a missionary to the ancient Middle East? We ourselves, engaged in the Christian ministry in a Metropolitan centre, know what it is to push off in a boat, figuratively speaking, and go to "the other side" of the lake, as we pursue our various hobbies of

travel in far-away countries, of photography, of numismatics—yes, and the *hobby of the cross*.

Speaking of ancient things, let us glance at our two crosses from the land of the Pharaohs. First, our replica of the hieroglyph “ankh,” the sacred “key of life” depicted on almost every obelisk. We have seen it clutched in the hands of stone Egyptian kings and priests, grasping it tightly in their stout fists as if to unlock their entrance to the immortality every Egyptian craved. It appears on the personal cartouche of Tut-enkhamon and on scarabs we buy from our old Moslem friend in Cairo, Abdul Rahim, who delights to call Lane, his brother.

The craving for eternal life of the ancient Egyptians anticipates, thus, the life-giving power of the Christian cross. It is used by Coptic Christians to-day, slightly modified. For just as they blended the old Egyptian hieroglyphs with the Greek alphabet, so they fused the badges of Egyptian and Christian religions. John Mark, preaching in Alexandria as early as 69 A.D., according to a deeply-rooted tradition, stood at the cross-roads and founded the Coptic Church, which through the centuries has stressed the monophysite belief that God and Christ are of one nature.

Our second Egyptian cross is a square bronze one found by our Arab friend Abdul when sifting historic sands near Memphis, once a thriving Christian community where now there is just a date-palm oasis strewn with temple fragments and grazed over by heavy Egyptian heifers. The pious Copt who made it centuries ago, for it appears to be the oldest in our collection, retained the long loop-handle of the “ankh,” but projected the upright of the true cross to meet it. At the centre of this Egyptian cross is a deep round depression which may be intended for a cup or a circle of eternity. Its shape is akin to a Byzantine one of solid gold in the British Museum collec-

tion of Early Christian art. When urged to secure other Egyptian crosses, Abdul one day presented us with what he called a "Christian cross." It is a bronze body of Christ which had become separated from his cross through the passing of centuries. His outstretched arms and upright body form the true delineation of his own symbol.

The early Copts enriched the world of religious symbolism through their fine tapestries, so full of devout feeling, as we see in the specimens in the Metropolitan Museum, New York. Their art influence was wide. In fact, Copts sent their designs as far as western England. Possibly during the Middle Ages, English and Irish craftsmen came to visit Coptic artists, to learn their charm in depicting Eastern Christian traditional forms of religious art taken over from Syria and Persia. It is little wonder that these visitors found them incorporating certain Islamic patterns, for the Coptic Christians were at times more cordial to their Arab neighbours than to Christians of rival sects who persecuted them as heretics.

Good Copts still face the East when at prayer, seven times a day, and keep themselves mindful of the cruel oppressions of the Emperor Diocletian by dating their important documents, not "A.D.," but so many years after "The Era of the Martyrs," August 29, 284 A.D.

Certain Coptic crosses carved on Nile Valley limestone tablets and tombs are full of primitive religious beauty, suggesting the asceticism of the fascinating desert monasteries where Copts were probably translating the life of Christ before the middle of the Second Century. It is said that in the Early Christian centuries there were ten thousand monks at Egyptian Oxyrhynchus. From the oases of the western desert, monks carried their translations of sacred writings into Nubia and the region of the Blue Nile.

Garments found in Upper Egyptian tombs from the Fifth Century A.D. show how the Copts used undyed linen and the tapestry methods of ancient Egypt. Jewelled square crosses, symbolic birds, wreaths of foliage, fascinating bits of Coptic iconography are worked into their designs.

The Coptic Church in Egypt to-day has monks still living in desert monasteries, surrounded by stockades built into the shifting sands, monasteries which have been functioning without interruption since the Fourth Century. In the Wady Natrûn there are four such, which help us realize why Egypt is called, the "Homeland of Monasticism." Not far from the Red Sea is the famous Coptic Monastery of Der Antonious, the Monastery of St. Anthony, with its square white cubical construction, lifted up by beehive domes like the houses of Palestinian peasants. Anthony of Egypt was the founder of monasticism and the church named for him on the west coast of the Gulf of Suez, claims to be not only the oldest Coptic Church in Egypt, but the oldest monastery in the world, antedating even Sinai Monastery. Its very ancient Greek "dedication crosses" are of the sort introduced into Egypt many centuries ago. They bear the Greek initials for Jesus Christ, Son of God, and the Greek monogram, "Nika," designating, "Jesus Christ, Conqueror."

Due to the presence of many Coptic Christians in Cairo to-day the city has a number of Coptic churches. From our visit to the Church El-Muallaka, founded possibly as early as the Sixth Century, we carried away impressions of a fine portrait of John Mark from the remarkable ivory and cedar inlaid screens, such as were used in harems of palaces and early Coptic churches to separate women and men. And in our camera we brought back lovely crosses carved into a wooden lattice in the Museum of Coptic Art, adjacent to the venerable church. In the even more famous Coptic Church of Abu Sarga, we were privileged

to see the large crosses of solid ivory, incorporated in the Heikal screen near the pulpit of rosewood, inlaid with delicate patterns of ebony and ivory.

Just as we were leaving Egypt for Palestine one year, we found in Port Said two decorative crosses, one of enamel and gilt studded with topaz, the other of filigree set with brilliants. From this, "the wickedest city in the world," we brought away these symbols of purity and integrity. Yet we wonder if the real symbols of the love of Christ in Port Said are not two plain little wooden signboards, conspicuous on the waterfront of the Canal where steamers from every part of the earth do their coaling or make their stately transit through this vital artery of trade. One reads:

A CLUB FOR SEAFARERS

St. Andrew's Waterfront Mission, Church of England.
Pass through the gate and walk in a straight line for eight minutes.

The other bears the invitation of a world-wide organization whose badge is the cross:

SALVATION ARMY GOSPEL MEETINGS, FRIDAYS AT 7

Chapter Eight

ENGLISH CROSSES FROM CANTERBURY TO CORNWALL

IN ONE of those diagonal English rains which look best when seen aslant a cathedral spire, we stood in the cloister of Salisbury, enthralled by spires lifting four hundred feet of grey grace against a greyer sky.

We were commenting on the fact that few British cathedrals have gables or pinnacles topped by crosses large enough to dominate their structure. True, many of them have exquisite gable crosses of a wide variety of forms, but seldom dominating ones. What tremendous ones it would take to stand out boldly in such settings! Certainly not at Ely, York, Wells, Winchester or even Canterbury have we seen crosses drawn to cathedral scale. Possibly there lingers a Reformation tradition still, surviving the Cromwellian iconoclasm.

We put this query to a citizen of Salisbury who, like us, had taken this rainy morning to enjoy the cathedral. He evaded it by telling us how entrancing the cloister is by moonlight and hoped we had not missed the lush marvel of the Cathedral Green that watery morning. Then added, "But even if our cathedrals are not crowned by crosses, you always find many a rood worked into their fabric, as are the nineteen consecration crosses on buttresses and walls of this Cathedral. And it is always thrilling to see a simple cross lifted up by its carved rood

screen as your eye looks beyond it from the choir, down the vast sweep of nave, under a beautifully groined ceiling."

We agreed, as we thought of this very effect here at Salisbury.

He continued, "And as for crosses, it would pay you to see two old Saxon ones at Romsey Abbey, yonder, as you go from Salisbury to Winchester. They have no equal in England."

Now Romsey is a pleasant little town to come upon, even in a dreary English rain. For it lies in that gentle Hampshire countryside where cottages with beetling brows of thatch stand shyly inside their thickets of flowers shielded from the road by hedges of dripping beauty. Stretches of woods—oak, beech, evergreen, elm, woven together with tall-plumed bracken—filter daylight through green leaves and provide a cathedral sanctity which is refreshing even for those who drive through. Romsey village is set in a country where we like to saunter and not go bolting by.

Its small square-built stone abbey even in the rain impressed us as being as fine a small Norman church as we had seen in England. Its low square central tower, its round-arched windows date its construction in the Twelfth Century when the Normans were building brilliantly in Sicily as well as in England. Seldom did they excel the simple beauty of their round arches in the choir and transept of Romsey Abbey or in the vaulting of its south aisle. But we were bent this morning on finding the two unique Saxon crosses in this old Abbey founded in 907 A.D. for nuns of the Benedictine Order by King Edward the Elder, who followed Alfred the Great.

Recalling that the early abbesses of Romsey were Saxons, born of those rugged people who from about 500 A.D. for four centuries ruled a large part of England, we felt their presence as we stepped from the graceful Abbess Door into the Cloister

and saw the Romsey Rood, carved in stone sheltered by a little pointed gable. Affixed to the stone wall of the cloister, this "Living Christ" from Saxon or early Norman times at once revealed itself as belonging to the Byzantine type of wide-eyed, head-erect, short-bearded Christ of the Mediterranean world (See Chapter Four.) His feet are not crossed as in Latin crucifixes but are side by side, pierced by two nails. As this type of crucifix died out early in the Eleventh Century in England, its presence here is unique. Its survival of the Reformation is perhaps due to the fact that when the Cloister was destroyed a shed was built on the site and for centuries nobody noticed the crucifix on the outer wall. Above the head of Christ the hand of God is descending, denoting the Father by a symbol seldom used after the Twelfth Century. Inside the Abbey in the South Choir Aisle we saw another Saxon cross. It uses the Byzantine manner of dramatizing the crucifixion by placing right and left of the living Christ a group of witnesses, Mary, John and two Roman soldiers, one reaching up the spear to pierce the side of Christ, the other, lifting the hyssop reed. The Romsey crosses illustrate how "immigrant" art ideas were brought in by prelates who had visited Rome and caught the details of Byzantine symbolism, or had travelled farther to centres of Eastern Christianity.

Coming into the little Romsey square in the still drenching rain we were pleased to find in a musty bookshop a small brass replica of the Saxon rood which lies beside me as I am writing this. What a genius the English have for knowing just what the travellers wish to carry away from their historic shrines! This small brass cross always reminds us of a quaint tradition about the first Abbess—she with the lovely Saxon name of Aethelfleda who was so spiritual that if a gust of English wind extinguished her candle while she was reading from the Scriptures to her nuns, she went on uninterrupted, by the mystical

light which just oozed from her fingertips! Typical, this, of romantic Romsey.

Another cross in our collection has its background in Saxon times—and earlier. It comes from the Hampshire cathedral town of Winchester, occupied by Saxons as early as the Fifth Century, when Cedric ruled. When Egbert was there crowned King of Britain in the Ninth Century, it became capital of the realm and so remained until the Twelfth Century. Saxons, who had been nomadic tillers of the land, moved into the vicinity of the walled town they called “Wintanceaster,” as glad for its protection by night, as they were to go forth to till their acres by day. It was a long step from these simple folk to Alfred the Great, first well-known English king, who wrote his noted Anglo-Saxon Chronicle at Winchester.

But our Winchester cross has nothing to do with either Saxon kings or even the cathedral founded by them in the Tenth Century and enlarged by so many successive builders that we can trace in it specimens of nearly every period of English cathedral architecture, from the early Norman, through the Tudor and the Renaissance. We found our little silver cross potent in a very unique institution in Winchester, known as “The Hospital of St. Cross,” to which is joined “The Almshouse of Noble Poverty.”

Walking one afternoon out from our oriel-windowed room in the “Got-Begot Hostel” on Winchester’s “The High,” we crossed a grassy meadow watered by the twisting, rapid waters of the brook Itschen. It was a path as charming as the one we walked one evening from Stratford to Shottery and on it, humanity was strolling with us—a pink-cheeked English girl leading three fine “Scotties,” women pushing babies in their prams, boys hustling out to the grassy cricket grounds of adjacent Winchester College—the oldest public school in Eng-

land. Climbing over a turnstile we saw a woman sitting on the wooden fence, reading under a waving willow, too absorbed even to look.

Through stately Beaufort Tower we entered a charming old-world community. Its quadrangle looks every bit of the eight centuries which have passed since Bishop Henry of Blois established a home for the poor of Christ and set up one of the oldest still-functioning benevolent trusts in England. He founded St. Cross, he said, "to support wholly thirteen poor men, feeble and so reduced in strength that they can with difficulty support themselves without another's aid." In 1151 the enterprise was turned over to the Knights Hospitaller of Jerusalem whose adventures of healing in Palestine had fitted them to care for the sick and to indulge their taste for stately architecture. An unusually large number of "Mason's marks," as well as tiny shells and vines, are tucked away on stone walls and at column bases.

The Brothers wear the same style of garments their predecessors used for many centuries—long black gowns with square silver "crutch crosses" on the left breast and brimmed black tam-o-shanter hats. When a brother dies his silver cross is placed in his coffin with him, then removed before interment and handed on to the new arrival who will occupy his tall-chimneyed cottage on the quad. At the Porter's Lodge we bought a small silver cross potent such as the Brothers wear. And there, too, we saw a cross potent inlaid in the traditional wooden breadboard on which is served the famous "Wayfarer's Dole"—a quaint Mediæval charity which sees to it that nobody applying at the gate for food shall go away without a piece of bread and a small horn of ale. The only other instance we know of food's being left by a will, is in connection with Vassar College, where once upon a time an unnamed benefactor pro-

vided that "ice-cream should be served to all the students on Tuesday and Saturday evenings and chicken on Sundays."

Three hundred years after the establishment of St. Cross a second foundation was laid by Cardinal Beaufort. He specified that his "Almshouse of Noble Poverty," should be not for "the poorest of the poor," as at St. Cross, but for men and women who "had had everything handsome about them" but had "met losses." They were to wear plum-coloured gowns and live in three-roomed garden apartments. What a host of applicants such an order would have in America to-day!

The five crosses of the Jerusalem cross appear on the fire buckets in the Refectory, on the Minstrels' Gallery, on a wall of the Refectory. But the typical cross of St. Cross is the square cross potent, as it looms so effectively on the reredos of Norman windows, in the exquisite Lady Chapel of the Hospital of St. Cross and everywhere throughout this charming Transition-Norman church, on a site visited as a "first pilgrim halting-place" when worshippers from the Continent headed for Canterbury. The Vestry room of St. Cross claims to have been a chapel of "the blissful, holy martyr" of Chaucer's "Canterbury tales."

Our English crosses seem linked with historic cathedrals and abbeys. One of them in fact, was a part of Lincoln Cathedral in 1092, a tall slim bit of English Oak, removed during a recent restoration and made into a cross bought for our collection by a friend. Another, our small brass Glastonbury cross, has to do with the Arthurian tradition of this ruined Abbey. It is inscribed:

*"Hic jacet sepultus inclitus
Rex Arturius in Insula Avalonia"*

*("Here lies buried the illustrious King Arthur,
In the island of Avalon.")*

We found it one day in a bookshop near the romantic ruins of Glastonbury whose abbot was Bishop Henry of Blois, founder of St. Cross. Few churches in England are so rich in legendary lore as Glastonbury. It claims association with both Joseph of Arimathea and King Arthur, "his descendant." On an islet in a marsh sacred as early as Druid days, called Avalon or Island of Apples, the legend goes, the first British Christians led by Joseph of Arimathea in 31 A.D. built a church of wattles. This was the same Joseph who was present at the crucifixion. The little reed church he built at Glastonbury is thought to have survived until the fire of 1184 destroyed the church built later to encase it. The Abbey grew to be a chief place of pilgrimage. Did it not possess the oldest Christian church in England? Was not Joseph himself, favourite disciple of Philip, buried there?

But as though these traditions were not enough to give Glastonbury prominence, it was "proved" that St. Patrick, evangelist, spent his last years in Glastonbury. And when, hard-pressed for funds following the fire of 1184, the Abbey made a timely "discovery of the bones of King Arthur and his fair-haired Queen Guinevere" at Glastonbury, it became "apparent" that here was located Avalon, to whose blessed isle the body of the King had been secreted before his death.

Of course critics looked askance at this evidence of something not even mentioned in William of Malmesbury's "On the Antiquity of the Church of Glastonbury" in the Twelfth Century. Moreover, rivalry was on between Canterbury and Glastonbury. Anything which might add to the prestige of either was eagerly seized upon. So, the finding of the huge bones of Arthur in a hollow oak and the cross of lead, which had been buried face down to avoid identification, was hailed by Glastonbury.

Who are we, to say whether Glastonbury is Avalon at all, or whether the Sixth Century hero, King Arthur was ever buried here, or whether such a cross was in his tomb, or whether Joseph of Arimathea was ever a missionary? Glastonbury was certainly one of the earliest Christian worship places in Britain and of this fact its unbelievable traditions are the best evidence. An appealing mystery lingers about its lofty piers, its broken windows and its roofless aisles and other-worldiness in contrast to the folky reality of its own huge Abbey kitchen, still intact. As for Arthur and his leaden cross—well, in the heart of every school boy, King Arthur lives, whether he ever walked Tintagel heights or succumbed to mortal wounds at Avalon. And have we not ourselves seen his “Round Table” for the four and twenty knights in the great Hall of Winchester Castle?

Our choicest English cross is the St. Martin’s acquired “As we were going to St. Ives”—a bus experience which at frequent stages reminded us of the nursery-rhyme man with kits, sacks, bags and wives. For we were in a bus of assorted types of English clergy, high church, low church, Methodist—and their wives, all going on a bank holiday, and descending at frequent intervals along the road from Plymouth to Penzance, for strong English tea and Cornish cream served in roadside gardens. One of the wives of this Autobus Clergy Club let fall the hint that when we got to St. Ives—and even better—Penzance, we should find beautiful crosses of native Cornish stones—lapis, agate, amethyst.

The seed was sown. And no sooner had we installed ourselves in an oceanside hotel in this little Cornish resort at the southwest tip of England and had our share of appetizing fish and chips, than we sought out the lapidary’s on the boardwalk promenade. Among an array of geological gems from the mines of Cornwall, we found a handsome piece of English

silversmith's work—a St. Martin's cross which had been made for an exhibit. It is as far removed from the crudity of our Damascus specimen as a lovely English garden is from the dusty Street Called Straight. Its chief ornament is a beautifully wrought "True Vine," winding itself about both arms of the cross, with clusters of grapes which become conventionalized at the intersection of the two bars to form a crown. It is studded with faceted white topaz which takes on the colour of whatever background the cross rests against.

We needed no "hall marks" to assure us of its quality. Of course, we had considerable discussion about the price of this elegant symbol which seemed suitable only for a queen to wear on a black velvet gown. But Lane came off victoriously with it. Adorned with products of Cornish mines, it represents in our collection that era in John Wesley's life when he rose before dawn, to preach in the open-air to miners of Cornwall.

Curious to learn who Martin was, we learned that he was born of pagan parents in 310, became at the age of ten a candidate for baptism and later, reluctantly entered the French army. One night when on duty at Amiens, he was approached by a beggar asking alms. Having no coins, Martin took his sword, divided his cloak and gave half to the old man. That night he dreamed that Christ himself had been disguised as the importunate one. Martin offered himself for baptism and years later was elected Bishop of Tours, became the patron saint of France, well known for his leniency to the oppressed and for missionary zeal in Brittany. The story as told to us that day in Cornwall was incorporated shortly after in the symbolism of the new church which Lane was then building in Brooklyn. And to-day those who pass by may see St. Martin dividing his cloak on an outer wall of this structure.

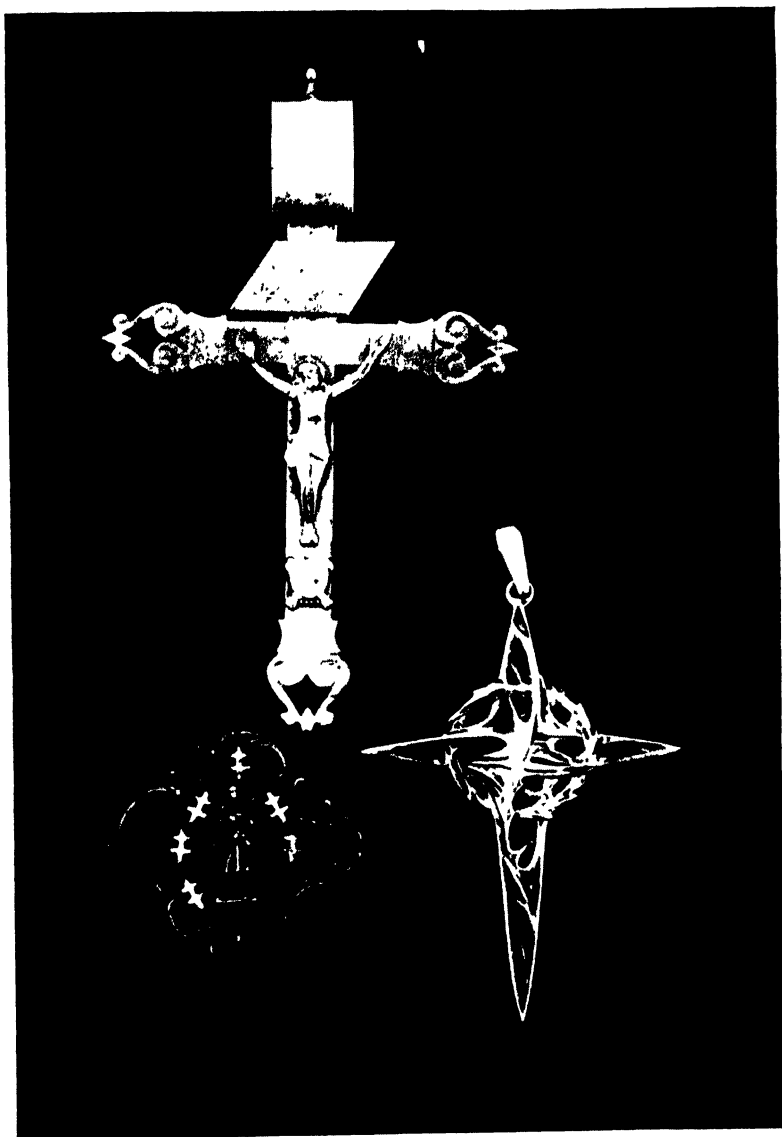
It seemed fitting that a Cornish silversmith should have

designed a Martin's cross, for this section of England along the Channel was closely related to France of the Eleventh and Fourteenth Centuries. As we came out of the lapidary's shop and looked across to St. Michael's Mount, that Mediæval castle-crowned islet just off shore, we recalled that parts of its abbey and chapel were built by the same order of Benedictines who erected Mont Saint Michel in opposite Normandy.

As we returned to our hotel clutching our new treasure, we saw the castle and its chapel disappear in the mists, even as it had emerged from the mists of history. We hoped that in the morning the very old Celtic cross on the seaward face of the Chapel with its eight-foot thick walls would offer itself to the telephoto lens of Lane's camera. Men of old certainly knew on what bold, inaccessible heights their shrines and their strongholds could be safely placed with the battering sea surrounding them as a mote.

One summer several years later, my mother bought a companion piece which is a worthy neighbour to the St. Martin's cross. Like this Cornish beauty, it is of delicately wrought silver studded with cut amethysts around which winds a delicate vine—in which we see both the symbolic branches of the New Testament and also the leaves of the English oak. Four well-carved English roses bound the intersection of the arms—shall we call these Tudor roses, or did the artists mean them for the "Rose of Sharon," an Old Testament symbol prefiguring Christ? Or shall we say they stand for Isaiah's prophetic words, "the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose"?

Like our cross from Romsey Abbey, another of our Cornish types is associated with a woman, Buryana. While we were driving one day from Penzance to Land's End with its magnificent scenery of ocean-beaten rocks rimming the jumping-off place, we came into a village whose wayside cross in its churchyard



FRENCH CROSSES. THE GENERAL'S HEIRLOOM,
JEAN D'ARC'S, CROSS OF THORNS

arrested our attention by its age. A pleasing square Cornish cross it is, which looks as if it had once crowned a taller upright. The carved figure upon it is almost effaced by weather. But it recalls a saintly Irish woman who was honoured by the Saxon King Athelstan who, departing in 930 for his conquest of the Scilly Isles, vowed that if he returned safely he would here build a church and dedicate it to Buryana. And so he did. Its story has become a well known part of this Land's End where the very rocks have romantic Cornish names—"The Irish Lady," "The Plumed Knight," and "Pulpit Rock"—where John Wesley preached above the roar of the Atlantic bursting in upon the English headland.

We were gratified that little St. Buryan's village had made replicas of its Cornish cross, in a bluish native stone. Of course, one of these was tucked into our luggage as we went on to Sennen, "last town in England."

Running out to Canterbury from London one day, we were going in the direction of the Cathedral along "Mercer's Lane" where Mediæval pilgrims bought souvenirs to carry home from the shrine of Thomas à Becket, murdered archbishop immortalized in Geoffrey Chaucer's "Canterbury Pilgrims." Admiring the flattering side view of the cathedral which gives a vista to front towers and the central one, we entered by the South Porch and spent the morning marvelling at what we saw in the vast length of the Cathedral; climbed the worn steps where Chaucer walked; were deeply impressed by the Thirteenth Century glass, older than Chartres, in which sapphires, rubies, topaz, emeralds, flash colours from a texture so strong that it cannot be cut with a diamond—such glass as is one of England's first concerns when "wars and rumors of wars" necessitate the removal of treasures. The Tomb of the Black Prince, "St. Augustine's Chair," the Chapel where à Becket was mur-

dered in 1190, the cloister with eight hundred coats of arms,—many of them cross-embazoned—all these features of the Cathedral impressed us. But we wanted a cross for our collection.

Since Canterbury is the head See of the Church of England, we felt it fitting that our group of English crosses should include one associated with this centre where Augustine met his outstanding success in the conversion of Britain. We proved more fortunate than others who have come away from Canterbury after a vain search for its authentic cross. On altars and walls in the vast Cathedral established by Augustine himself at the close of the Sixth Century, we had been seeing pleasing square crosses with their ends curving to become parts of a bounding circle. We were told that these were “consecration crosses,” originally instituted by Emperor Theodosius at Constantinople in the Fourth Century, to be placed in heathen temples that were about to be made into Christian churches. Justinian’s law, about 528, decreed that no new church was to be begun until a bishop had first made a prayer and affixed the consecration cross in the place where the new church would rise.

So through our minds, as we went walking through the town, our “quest” was uppermost. Chance led us down a little thoroughfare known as “King’s Bridge.” There, affixed to a charming old house along the tiny canal, we saw a shingle: “Canterbury Weavers’ Jewellery Shop.” Our opportunity! We soon found ourselves inside a house famous because it had been the home of French Huguenots who, fleeing from persecution in France, here set up their silk looms and pursued their arts and crafts. The quaint old house with its leaded casements looking out onto the canal over boxes of bright red geraniums was crammed with interesting articles. And for us,

there was waiting a true Canterbury cross, shaped like the consecration crosses we had been seeing all morning in the Cathedral, its square arms extending to form segments of an incomplete but clearly apparent circle. Its details of carved vine are copied from an old cross found in St. George Street in 1860. Studded with marcasite and set at its centre with a beautiful topaz, it proved irresistible as an expression of Canterbury's epochal Christian influence.

For this interesting city has shrines which are even more interesting than the Cathedral—whose proper name is Christ Church, so called by Augustine himself, as he remembered the tall, plain silver cross and the painting of the Saviour he had carried when his band of missionaries sent out by Gregory at Rome landed in Kent on their task of spreading Christianity among the Saxons. These were still selling fair-skinned Angle children as slaves in Rome, to the chagrin of the good Pope. For example, there is little St. Martin's on a steep hill overlooking the city, called "the oldest church in England," where worship has proceeded for thirteen centuries. This had been built by British Christians in Roman times and was used as a private chapel by the still pagan King Ethelbert's Christian Queen Bertha, a pious French woman, who remembering the patron of her French homeland, Martin of Tours, called the chapel "St. Martin's" and was happy to share it with Augustine and his fellow missionaries. Through their influence, Ethelbert was persuaded to be baptized by immersion in a large font in St. Martin's Church on June 2, 597—that wonderful era when in far-off Constantinople, Byzantine Christianity was prospering in the brilliant Sancta Sophia, completed by Justinian in 537. What Constantine was to the Roman Empire, Ethelbert was to England—its first Christian ruler.

So, too, of great interest we found vestiges of St. Augustine's

own Monastery and Abbey Church, where the good Queen Bertha, King Ethelbert and Augustine were buried—a church once esteemed of greater magnificence than the Cathedral. Its ruins to-day took on life for us when we saw them incorporated into St. Augustine's College, where the students in training for mission service of the Church of England were celebrating their morning communion in their favourite place, a Fourteenth Century crypt chapel. On the wall is a list of all graduates who have served as missionaries of the cross; one name in red letters reads, "Sydney Brooks, fell martyr 1890." The sequel we saw in another chapel above the crypt, where an organ bears a dramatic inscription, to the effect that it was given by the Chinese Government in reparation for the martyrdom of Sydney Brooks, who was cruelly put to death near Ping Yin in North China, by the Boxers.

Crosses top the crowns of the British monarchs, their orbs and sceptres heavy with the "Star of Africa" diamond, the three-hundred-carat Cullinan, sapphires and rubies out of the heart of imperial India, as we have seen in the Tower of London. British ensigns bear the crosses of St. Andrew, St. George and St. Patrick. The coats-of-arms of many of her most noted personages are crossed, as seen in the display sent to the New York World's Fair, when the shields of Wycliffe and Shakespeare hung side by side with Anne Boleyn's and Shelley's quartered with its wayfaring shell.

But we cannot close our glance at English crosses without including five Celtic crosses in our collection. For the many varieties of this group are favourites in England and America, whose National Cathedral at St. Albans, Washington, has a distinctive outdoor Celtic cross in its driveway. Sometimes we are at a loss to know whether to call these Irish or Scotch crosses. For early Irish missionaries brought their message and

their crosses not only into Cornwall and west England, but into pagan Scotland. Some of the choicest Celtic crosses are found to-day in the island of Iona, off the north coast of Scotland where Columba, born in Donegal, established a monastery in 563 which exerted a wide influence. These Celtic missionaries with their inexhaustible force of faith spread their ascetic monastic ideas all the way from the Clyde to Brittany and south as far as Italy, as we see in their illuminated manuscripts. We can find a close connection between the monastic symbolism of Coptic Christian Egypt and Ireland.

In Iona alone, sacred for association with Druids even before Columba arrived, there were hundreds of memorial crosses, for the island became a favourite burial place for kings of Scotland, Ireland, Norway, and Denmark. The finest of the crosses remaining from Reformation times are the Maclean and the St. Martin's.

Our four Celtic crosses—two of them from Princess Street, Edinburg, one from Iona, two from America—are all of tall, graceful proportions with arms curved at the intersection and bounded by a circle. All are variously decorated with the runic designs, bosses in groups of five to symbolize the five wounds of the Saviour; chain work, checker patterns, "Solomon's seals" and network seen all through Eastern Christendom and on many a Byzantine, Russian and Moslem manuscript. Do these take inspiration from Solomon's ornamentation of his Temple at Jerusalem?

In Iona to-day live a skilled silversmith and his wife who are making accurate reproductions of the best types of stone cross, in sterling silver. One of these in our collection is most curious. It looks like a slender bush, with thin trunk terminating in a leafy top, which on a closer inspection, conceals a crown and a square cross above which is a highly conventionalized cloud

with hand of God descending. But this is only my own Celtic imagination running wild, perhaps.

The market cross was a distinctive feature of thriving Mediæval English towns. At first erected in yards of monasteries where moneys were received and sermons preached, they were later removed to the intersection of thoroughfares, a real community gathering place as well as market centre. One of the finest is Winchester's "Butter Cross," a carved Gothic canopy mounted on several steps and tipped by a cross. As we looked at its fountain we recalled the quaint story of its predecessor, where merchants, in time of plague, asked customers to leave their money in the basin of flowing water to which they returned at night to collect the coins safeguarded from pollution. Salisbury's market cross with buttresses rising from its rounded arcade looked to us like the crown of an Alfred or an Ethelbert. The one at little Epworth where John Wesley preached to throngs still stands as a marker, but has lost its cross.

All of these old market crosses may have been designed to exact their influence for fair trade, as was done at Dalmatian Dubrovnik, which carved a Latin inscription over the scales of the Sixteenth Century Customs House: "With whatsoever scale ye weigh to others, God will weigh you."

Chapter Nine

FRENCH THORNS AND THE GENERAL'S HEIRLOOM

ALSO SOME SPANISH CROSSES AND PORTUGUESE

FRANCE the art-loving, France the skilful-fingered, France the creator of beauty—whether it be a Chartres Cathedral, or a Chenonceaux Chateau; a consummate Bougereau “Nativity” or a Rodin’s “Hand of God”—is appropriately represented in our collection by four of our handsomest crosses. All four have stories of warm human interest.

One of these was thrust into my hand at a luncheon table in a quiet spot in the midst of Manhattan’s noon roar of traffic. While we were chatting of far-off places enjoyed in travel, my hostess suddenly opened her purse and handed me a little package in white tissue.

“Here is something for your collection,” she said. “I had a Fifth Avenue jeweller copy it from my own which was sent to me with a letter from an English army chaplain during the World War. The letter had been dictated to the ‘Padre’ by Bob, just after he was shot down by a German plane. Bob was British, you know. He and I were to have been married after the War. His letter told me how, walking one day through a French village, he had found an old peasant cross down among the ruins of a poor little cottage near St. Quentin. The cross appealed to him as unique. He wanted me to have it—planned to send it to me as something very precious, until he could get

back from the War to a place where engagement rings were sold. Meantime an anti-aircraft gun got him. The end came. And with it, my own dream of happiness. The cross is my only material gift from Bob. I need not tell you how I prize it. Knowing of your collection, I had it copied for you. So far as I know, these are the only two in this country."

When I opened the package I found a heavy silver cross, about two and one-half inches long, composed entirely of thorns. French thorns, from a soldier's uniform pocket! I felt the whole poignant tragedy as I held it in my hand. Jane and her cross of thorns! The upright is of long, sharp, interwoven thorns. So, too, the transverse. And circling the centre is a true crown of thorns:

"Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?
See from his head, his hands, his feet,
Sorrow and blood flow mingled down."

I have never seen a duplicate of this French cross. And, as though to make its pathos most ironic, shortly after I received my replica, a thief broke into Jane's apartment and made off with the original cross, together with her other valuables. Detectives never recovered it. So, wherever the French peasant cross of thorns is now, we hope it is redeeming its owner, for he will never know how cruel was his theft unless he happens to read these lines, which is not likely. I offered to return our cross to the giver, but Jane declined, saying that she wanted me to keep it and that she might sometimes borrow it to wear.

Another of our French crosses we call, "The General's Heirloom." It, too, has a World War history, this ancient, deep yellow, golden cross, dainty with the art which only a French goldsmith can achieve. Before the United States entered the

Great War, an American woman physician from Pittsburgh, a well-known tennis champion, an out-of-door person who helped build her own summer home in Canada, enlisted to drive a French ambulance to the Front. One Christmas Eve, after she had been hauling wounded boys to dressing stations, she suddenly felt Christ's presence more really than she ever had known him before. Although she was the daughter of Methodist missionaries, she had never had any definite religious experience. But that Christmas Eve at the Front, the White Comrade spoke to her and claimed her as one who was doing his work. Finding herself surrounded by pious French Catholics when the great experience came, she walked to a barn which had been converted into a chapel and there declared her desire for baptism.

A famous French general became her godfather. Shortly after, he presented her with an antique gold cross of slender workmanship which he had sent an officer to bring from his chateau near Rheims. When Dr. X. returned to America to say farewell to her friends before plunging permanently into medical work in the slums of Paris, as a sister of St. Vincent de Paul, she came to see my mother. As she was leaving she thrust the general's golden cross into mother's hands.

"I am not permitted to carry this precious treasure with me," she said. "A simple cross of ebony shall be my only one. Keep this for me. If I ever return, I shall ask you for it. It is my dearest earthly possession. I want you to have it."

And Mother has loaned the "General's Heirloom" to our collection. Side by side with Jane's, it tells the tragedies of all war and suggests the only effective preventive of war-born agonies, the redeeming love of Christ lived out by all the nations of the world.

We do not know even the new name of Dr. X. If she is

living to-day, she is doubtless playing as lively a part in healing the woes of France as she did twenty-five years ago.

What does the golden cross of Dr. X. look like? It was the General's heirloom. It had for centuries been handed down by one generation to the eldest son of the next. Only on so solemn an occasion as the baptism of the great-hearted, courageous American doctor into his faith could he bear to part with it. It is of yellowest gold rolled so thin, and worn still thinner by prayerful use, that we hesitate to lift it up lest it crack, as indeed the trefoil at its base has already done. It is of Latin shape, a crucifix bearing the figure of Christ wrought with delicate skill. And, with typical French art which tries to soften the agony by beautifying it, the board above his head, carved with the "INRI" ("Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews"), has been surrounded with an exquisitely-carved border of tiny flowers. The ends of this French cross are floriated with designs unlike any other we have seen. They look like scrolls worked into concealed fleur-de-lis for purity. Yet they also resemble little gold harps at the ends of the cross. Such emblems are, as always, whatever the beholder sees in them.

On the reverse side, several sets of initials have been engraved, erased, and re-engraved, denoting successive owners. How we wonder who "M.B." was and under what circumstances she or he received this golden cross? Those two initials by their careful workmanship stand out as a part of the original goldsmith's design. Others are more crudely scratched below.

I had long wanted a Lorraine cross—an upright with two simple parallel crossbars. They were plentiful in French jewellers' windows at Cannes, enamelled in entrancing blue or gold, but too expensive for our Parsonage collection. But one day at home when sorting out some of my school-girl treasures of long ago, I came across a pendant given me by Mademoiselle de

Velay, the aristocratic but unfortunate French countess who first introduced me to the beautiful language which has since been invaluable to Lane and me in our travels—especially during the international crisis of 1939, when we were stranded as “American refugees” in Italy and had to cross frontier after frontier during mobilization in France, Switzerland, Belgium, Holland.

This French filigree pendant, as dainty as a piece of fine French lace, carries at its centre, the Maid of Orelans, Jean d’Arc, surrounded by eight small gold Lorraine crosses. There they had been all those years, waiting for our collection to catch up with forgotten treasures of childhood. “Mademoiselle” had given it to me the day I successfully recited the conjugations of French verbs. She had bought it in Domrémy-la-Pucelle when attending the village play by which the birthplace commemorated Joan’s obedience “to the voices.”

One Christmas there came into our collection from a member of my Bible Class who shares our interest in crosses among the nations, a handsome gold one which had been sold to her in New York as Russian. Its elegance of design almost conceals the fact that it is a cross. Many persons would take it for just a charming pendant. But under its decoration of brilliant white stones, and behind its intersecting spearpoints which have been worked into fleurs-de-lis, we saw that it is really two crosses, a square one at the top, which becomes the upper half of a Latin cross, terminating in a heart-shaped brilliant. The wide loop by which it hangs from its chain dates it as being at least a century or two old. It has become so thin that wearing it is a risk.

Curiously enough, we found an unexpected clue to its identity months later. One day Lane and I were peering into the windows of Gibraltar’s “Main Street,” that most curious narrow passageway where wares from India and London, Spain

and France are crowded together. Outside the shops British Tommies, travellers from all over the world, refugees from over the Spanish lines at La Linea, Jewish merchants, "Bobbies," bankers, all rub shoulders with long-robed Moors bringing their bright-coloured cushions, belts, and purses over the Mediterranean from Tangier. "Main Street," Gibraltar, has several antique shops. The one where we were halting has proved most reliable on our yearly visits to this fortress town. It stands on the left of the thoroughfare, just where officers' families turn to climb up to their barrack "flats" clinging to the steep slope of the Rock. No wonder people here take on the goat-like gait of the long-haired creatures which graze on the upper Rock, for level space is at a premium. The constant jam forces pedestrians from sidewalks into the street, to be brushed by donkeys laden with flowers from Spain, or lorries taking supplies out to the garrison at Europa Light on Gibraltar Strait.

In this small shop window, gleaming at us with tempting beauty, was a gold cross, exactly the shape of our "Russian" one I have just described. It was slightly smaller. Of more recent workmanship, because its gold was not worn so thin. It was adorned with beautifully-cut green stones, faced with emeralds.

"Well!" we exclaimed to the antiquarian. "You have a Russian cross like ours! How did it get here?"

"No, Lady," replied the Gibraltan. "This is a Spanish cross from Cordova. A refugee fleeing over the border when Franco was pushing to victory, begged me to buy it. She was starving, she said. Would I not take it for a few shillings? Yes, it is indeed a Spanish cross and a very fine one. It is the most aristocratic one in my shop."

My "indulgent backer" acquired it within the next half hour and now it is in its case beside the similar one sold to our friend

in New York as a Russian cross. But its real identity came forth one day after our return home from that summer of Mediterranean meanderings. By merest chance we opened the Encyclopædia Britannica to the section, "Jewellery." Turn to it yourself. There you will see a picture of this very cross, boldly labeled "*A French-Norman* pendant cross, characteristic example of peasant jewellery of branched open work set with crystals; peasant design." This settled the controversy. Hence, the inclusion of these two elegant gold pendant-crosses in our group with the heirloom of the French General and Jane's cross of thorns. They suggest full-skirted, rosy-checked, proud French-Norman peasant women who on state occasions wear caps of lace and adorn themselves with elegant gold crosses and fine earrings generations old.

The journeys of our two French-Norman crosses to Gibraltar and New York illustrate how immigrant-art always tends to spread from one land to another in the hands of refugees and travellers. The transfer of specimens often causes confusion to archæologists. One day in Rhodes, we found ourselves baffled by such a question. A Greek Rhodian was offering us what he put forth as a genuine scarab. When we protested that Rhodes never made scarabs, but was famous for its pottery and plates, he said, "But someone brought the scarab here." Chances are, it was genuine, since it was the only one he had among his pile of colourful island pottery. Rhodians, as we saw later in the Museum of the Knights, imported all sorts of Mediterranean art wares. Articles found in tombs are not necessarily indigenous. They came from Egypt or the Middle East, as well.

At Gibraltar, too, we found an old Spanish silver cross with two parallel arms, a patriarchal type, with four bundles of intersecting rays of hope emerging from two crowns of thorns, and with its terminations, those of a cross fleury, that is, a

wide-open petal symbolizing the mature Christian. It came from Burgos, headquarters of General Franco's government during the Spanish civil war. It shall always speak to us of the futility of brothers warring against brothers. To it, in our thoughts, is linked a cheap metal cross we found two years later in the little Spanish port city of Vigo, west of Burgos, on the Atlantic coast. It was one of many being sold that day to men and women and children still drinking the dregs of war which had ended in Franco's peace only five months before. Many of these had been standing all morning in line waiting for the bitter brown bread—so cheap that it made many of them ill. Mothers had been clamouring in the market-place, to get a few small fish for their families, in a town set amid good grain fields and an ocean yielding an unlimited amount of fish. Yet, so the rumour ran, these products were being shipped to "those who had helped Franco win the war."

These considerations, however, were forgotten for the moment by the Vigo people we saw jamming into the cathedral. So much so that we could not set foot even in the vestibule. For it was the feast of the "Christ of Victory" and in the evening the finely-wrought altar crucifix would be carried through the streets with thousands following it. For was not this year's cessation of war the work of "The Vigo Christ of Victory"? Women who debated near the cathedral square whether they would spend their few "pesetas" for bread or a thick tall candle to carry in the procession decided in favour of the latter and went away content. Had not their sons been killed at Valencia? Food could be had some other time—perhaps.

Our Caravaca cross was made in that little town in south-eastern Spain known for its Mediæval Castle of the Holy Cross and for its church housing a famous crucifix, which is carried through the streets every May in recognition of its "healing

power." It is a brass reliquary of the type affixed to doorways of old Caravaca houses, whose occupants say, "When the two parts of the reliquary open of their own accord, a storm is brewing." It has two wide transverse bars, as the patriarchal and the Lorraine crosses have, suggesting Christ's ministry to Jews and Gentiles; and two short transverse bars, one making a little pedestal, the other a bar across the upright to receive the loop. On one side is carved a figure of Mary standing lightly on the crescent moon, as in the famous painting by Murillo. The moon here denotes the worshipful attitude of all nature, supplemented by the adoration of little angels surrounding Mary on the cross. However, our favourite interpretation of this side of our cross is, the eternal identification of the mother with the sufferings of her son, in Jesus' time and in every age.

On the reverse side of the Caravaca cross is an elaborate depiction of all the elements of the Golgotha tragedy. Beneath a crown of thorns on the topmost bar, the head and arms of a western Christ, accompanied by two angels, rest on the centre transverse, with his feet affixed by a single nail to the third bar intersecting the upright about half way to its top. Quite different from the Russian cross where the feet are attached to a low diagonal bar. This leaves room on the upright, below, for the traditional three nails, with a halo about them and a cherub above; a strident rooster, reminiscent of Peter's warning cock. At the foot of the cross are two iron-studded flagellation scourges. Right and left of the feet of Christ are a ladder by which he was carried up, a hammer and pliers, a spear, a sponge on a reed, and Judas' lantern. Certainly a sufficiently graphic dramatization to please even a Byzantine symbolist.

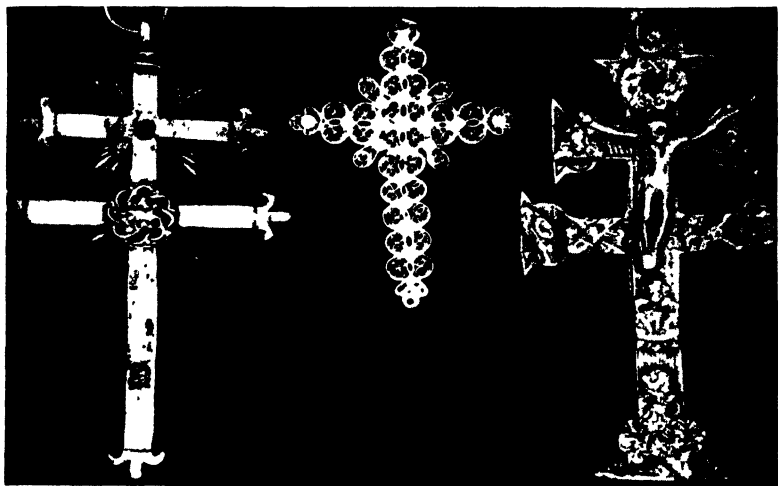
From Cordova, Spain, by way of a little pawn shop in Málaga, we secured a silver cross, whose filigree is so lace-like and so worn with age that it is falling apart. We keep it on

cotton. Its highly conventional design of elegant openwork and its little round beaded dots always suggest to us the skilled Moorish craftsmen who, with Moslem abhorrence of everything savouring of idolatry, were summoned from Damascus to work on the amazing Cordova mosque, now the Cathedral. This cross speaks to us of the "Dark Ages" when Tenth Century architects erected the twelve hundred arched pillars in twenty-nine aisles, ornamented them with ten tons of mosaic tesserae from Constantinople, lighted it with almost five thousand graceful little glass lamps, and tucked into every available surface the delightful geometric designs of the Islamic art. Ever since that far-off century, Cordova has been noted for its silversmiths, an influence going back to Syrian and Byzantine sources. Every time we see our lacy Cordova cross, we think of the Moorish silversmiths, and feel the "bounce" of Eastern art across the Mediterranean from the Dardanelles to Gibraltar.

In the rugged mountains of Andalusia, between Gibraltar and Málaga, is the strange Spanish town of Ronda, whose Palace of the Moorish Kings stands on the rim of an extinct volcano. It is such a site as Moors would choose for a fastness. For in its narrow gorge, the "Tajo" of the Guadiaro River, five hundred feet deep and three hundred wide, citizens protected themselves from enemies approaching by the fertile emerald plain. Ronda has always been the stronghold of men of extreme political convictions. But we always associate with it the pleasant craft shops where hand-carved chairs and fine leather work are produced. Not far from one studio, where picturesque carved chests were being turned out, we found a Ronda cross of bronze. It serves as a reminder of this old Moorish province where Granada, too, felt the impact of Arab conquerors and the skills of rugged mountain folk.

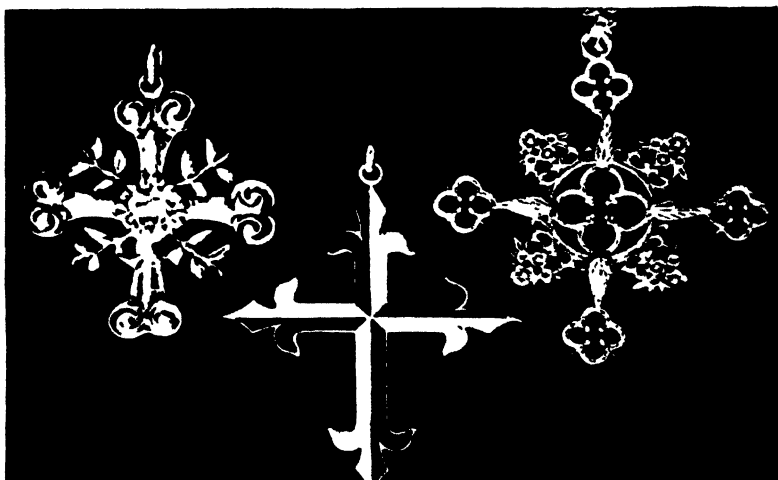
From the harbour of Málaga, near the fine old Promenade of

PLATE NINE



SPANISH CROSSES BURGOS, CORDOVA, CARAVACA

See text, pages 140, 142 and 143



ITALIAN CROSSES RHODES, BOLOGNA, SAN MARCO

See text, pages 151, 155 and 159

pre-revolution days, we found a little brass cross which appeals to us because its stubby upper arm is intersected by well-fashioned bundles of rays, indicating the intention of its designer to present a "resurrection cross." On many a church altar, in America and elsewhere, this is a favourite cross, for its sunburst of rays speaks the Easter hope, when the three Marys "very early on the first day of the week . . . when the sun was risen," came to the Garden and found the empty tomb of the risen Lord.

The day after we acquired our little Vigo cross we were still thinking about the problems of Spain in its throes of reconstruction, that suspicious era when prisons were jammed with suspects and prison ships floating off shore were jammed with critics of the regime, and islands were loaded with the presence of valuable professional men—even doctors whom Franco did not wish to imprison, but did so at the insistence of "brother" physicians. From this atmosphere we came into the unbelievable contrast of prosperous, neutral Portugal, a great country of which many foreigners know too little. At the moment its capital, Lisbon, was basking in the efficiency of its dictator, Salazar. Its shops were filled with modern wares. New apartments were rising on the hills facing the superb harbour of the Tagus River. Neat, buxom Portuguese fish wives strode contentedly through the market sections gracefully carrying flat baskets filled with long silver fish. Modern motors whirled out the elegant Boulevard of Victory. An appetizing aroma of Brazilian coffee filled the air. And opposite the famous Church of the Jeronimos a Portuguese Exposition was under construction along "The River" to celebrate the eight hundredth anniversary of the existence of Portugal.

Just as we were going into that famous church with its long ivory facade in the Manueline style, the silver wings of an

American Clipper Ship whirled over our heads and disappeared into the clouds. It was bound from its base on the River with mail which would be in New York the next day. How thrilling to see it flashing over the very site from which Vasco da Gama sailed in his slow ship of epochal destiny around the Cape of Good Hope to India, opening up routes of trade and colonization which enriched not only his own Portugal but all Europe.

On the top of the magnificent Jeronimos church, built to celebrate Vasco da Gama's successful return in 1499, we saw against the sky the emblem of Portuguese Christian explorers—a globe with a girdle across it, and topped with a square Portuguese cross. We saw it below, too, on the tomb of Vasco da Gama, and on the highest building of the new Exposition across the road. Portugal does not forget that on the eve of his sailing, da Gama prayed near this site in the little Belem Chapel ("Bethlehem"), which had been erected by Prince Henry the Navigator, for mariners. Like Christopher Columbus who planted the cross for Spain in the western world, the Portuguese explorers kept compass and cross close together.

The Portuguese cross is of the pattée type, similar to the Maltese, and is most beautiful when done in red enamel and white, with touches of blue—the national colours.

A variant of the usual Portuguese cross we found one day in beautiful Funchal, capital of the Madeira Islands, an integral part of the Republic of Portugal. This delicate little square cross is a perfect Maltese, with the eight-pointed, indented ends tapering toward the centre, symbolic of the eight Beatitudes. At its heart, in fine blue enamel, is a flower. How typical of this flower-laden island paradise floating in Atlantic mists! We know of no finer illustration of how nations make their own characteristic crosses, than this exquisite gold filigree cross from

Madeira. Its heavier counterpart tops the gable of the little Funchal cathedral, where the flower women come to worship at the beginning of busy market days. Removing their huge baskets of blossoms from their heads and setting them down outside the little cathedral, they don their silk kerchiefs and go in to pray that their baskets will be empty before night.

Chapter Ten

CROSSES FROM THE LEGACY OF ITALIAN ART

THE seventeen Italian crosses in our collection give us as much inspiration as any—unless it is the group of thirty-one gathered in the Lands of the Cross: Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor, and Egypt. These Italian crosses are of no intrinsic value so far as their materials or their antiquity are concerned. They were made as yesterday, in comparison with our Nestorian or our Coptic bronze from Memphis or even our Byzantine and Crusader crosses from Istanbul and Jerusalem. Yet they are linked with Italian cities of the Renaissance which spread their newborn culture, their enthusiasm for life, and their vitally beautiful forms of religious art in those amazing two centuries between Dante's vision in 1300 and the fall of Florence in 1530.

In an earlier chapter we have appraised the pious art of the Early Christians stressing in their Catacombs the resurrection of Christ and their desire to have this great reality fruit in immortality for their own persecuted lives. And elsewhere we have enthused over the wonders of Mediæval symbolism as we have seen it in the mosaics of Ravenna; in the Assisi crucifix; in the virility of Saxon faith at Canterbury; and the mysticism that bloomed at Glastonbury.

But now we turn with equal enthusiasm to certain characteristics of the Renaissance, when artists broke away from the rigidity of mosaic and depicted their love of life and their

religion of joy, in frescoes of the "forerunner" Giotto in "The Church of the Arena" in Padua and the gems of Fra Angelico on the walls of San Marco Monastery, Florence, showing little friars stepping out into flowering meadows of Paradise, dancing for joy, hand joined to hand. He delighted to emphasize the hospitality of his Dominican order by painting in a lunette over a cloister doorway, a beautiful Christ with long fair hair, nimbed by a square cross, being welcomed into the Monastery by two friars. How this appealed to the greatest preacher of the Renaissance, Savonarola, returning to his quiet cell here after a mighty preachment in the Duomo of Florence. The same exquisite charm of form which Fra Angelico painted in his Monastery fresco of the Annunciation, his Madonna and Child, and his golden angels, he gave to his "Crucifixion," where he tucks into the new beauty of Renaissance art, an old symbol for Christ in the form of a white pelican above his head. It would have been impossible for a saintly, gifted Florentine friar like Fra Angelico to make even a Golgotha devoid of beauty. He was a true son of the Renaissance.

What a cycle of influence at San Marco—Savonarola inspired by the art of Fra Angelico and Fra Bartolommeo, and he in turn moulding by his sermons not only these two artists but also Michelangelo and Bellini. After the death of Savonarola no more lovely madonnas came from the brush of Bellini, it is said. Visitors to San Marco to-day are as much interested in the rosary, the hair-cloth shirt, and desk of Savonarola as in the masterpieces of the artists.

Several of our Italian crosses have colour as their chief trait—that glowing, pleasant colour we always associate with our travels up and down the long peninsula between the Adriatic and the Tyrrhenian. It is that glow and that shine which draw us back to the siren shores of the blue Bay of Naples trembling

under the rosy plume of Vesuvius; to the azure grottoes of Capri; the green Umbrian plains with their heavy white oxen; and the rosy sunset heights of Perugia looking toward the Apennines, or the black and white facade of Sienna cathedral. Take, for example, our coral cross carved from a single piece of this wave-washed secretion of the animal kingdom. When we look at its surface, bevelled with eleven little faceted squares, one for each of the faithful disciples, and all crowned by a tiny pilgrim shell, we see the warm red walls of Pompeiian villas in the shadow of Vesuvius; or the harvest of tiny oval tomatoes waiting under their shelter of trailing grapes to be plucked. Or we see the florid face of the man who sold it. Opening his box of cameos as he saw us halt our car near Sorrento, he was confronted by what we thought an "impasse." But upon our insistence that we wished nothing at all unless he had an antique cross of coral, he ran around the corner and actually brought back a coral cross whose charm was irresistible, and surely antique. For almost every time we touch it, it falls apart and we have to cement it again.

Or take the neighbour of that lovely deep-rose coral cross, the equally deep-blue one from Santa Margherita on the blue Gulf of Genoa, at the heart of the flower-filled Italian Riviera. It looks more like a flower itself with four slender sapphire-coloured petals covered with a filigree of silver frost, than like a cross. And each time we hold this glass treasure up to the light, we feel as if we were looking through a Mediæval cathedral window. It is suitable neighbour to the gracefully tapering mosaic cross we found near Genoa's Crusader Cathedral of San Lorenzo with all its own Crusader crosses worked into its marble facade. This Genoese cross looks as if stones of chalcedony had been hammered by fairy fingers into the invisible tesserae which make the background for finely

wrought white mosaic flowers, the whole comprising a design as pure and simple as the blue and white Della Robbia medallions of the "Bambini" at Florence. At the centre of this colourful cross is a circle filled with what look like dust-sized fragments from ground-up ruby, sacrificed to make back-ground for a white dove, symbolic of the Christian soul, with wings ambitiously outspread. We had not dreamed that the dingy shop near San Lorenzo would yield anything so dainty.

Our Bologna cross, one of the cheapest so far as price paid is concerned, is one of the most charming in colour and shape. Of striking black and white enamel laid on in alternating stripes, with its arms of equal length terminating in shapely fleurs-de-lis making it a cross patonce, this will always speak to us of the Renaissance university centre of Bologna where we found it. Dante and Giotto both were graduates of this oldest university in Europe, whose ten thousand students gave its community a proud title, "The Learned City." But in addition to her university and her strange Twelfth Century towers, leaning as much as eight feet out of plumb, to which her nobles fled when Bologna was at war with her neighbouring towns, Bologna has a number of interesting churches, dating from the Fourth Century, including the famous San Petronio, which inspired many a Renaissance student of its sculptures, including young Michelangelo. Among these, also, is the Church of San Domenico, where the founder of the Dominican order is buried.

As we approached this Thirteenth Century church we noticed an unusual square cross over its portal. Later we secured a replica from the brother who showed us the great carved altar piece of the Massegne brothers of Venice, with a Fourteenth Century crucifix lifted by its highest pinnacle; and the famous "Arca di San Domenico," the shrine executed by Niccola

Pisano and Fra Guglielmo to contain the sarcophagus of Domenic, with one of its angels carved by the young Michelangelo when a political exile from Florence. But we confess that even more than the art treasures of this church, we prize the social ministry we saw that noon to a group of hungry Bolognese who gathered in its court and received in their bowls generous servings of delicious vegetable soup. Our black and white cross always recalls this merciful scene at San Domenico.

Going back to the matter of mosaic crosses. There is in our collection a cheerful little one bought at the Cathedral of Monreale, Sicily. Cheap and modern though it is, this speaks to us of the dazzling mosaic splendour achieved for the Norman kings of Sicily in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries. At that time William I ("the Bad") was bringing Moslem artists from the East to adorn his palace and its Capella Reale, the most richly ornate chapel in the world, in the city of Palermo; and William II ("the Good") was lifting into the sun-swept air of Monreale at the head of the "Conca d'Oro" filled with its golden treasure of lemon groves, the vast extent of his cathedral mosaics depicting the whole sweep of Bible history from Old Testament times through the resurrection of Jesus. Seventy thousand square feet of mosaic Bible stories incorporate the chief symbols of Christian belief. The giant head and shoulders of the Byzantine, regal, wide-awake Christ himself completely fill the half dome of the apse. And as though to reward the Islamic artists imported from the Arab world to execute the art of the splendour-loving Norman kings of Sicily, the Norman king seems to have given them free hand to work out their own tastes in the famous Twelfth Century cloister, where more than two hundred dainty colonettes with a wide variety of capitals are inlaid with brilliant fragments of

gold and red and blue in conventional designs, and lift up pointed arches making a maze of fairy-like perspectives. Washington Irving called Granada's Alhambra "a gem of the delicate fancy of the Moor." But he had never seen the Benedictine Cloister of Monreale.

Yet, if the mosaics of Monreale are twice as extensive as those of Venice, we can never yield second place for sheer glory of worshipful design to those in the facade of San Marco, facing the huge Piazza dotted at every hour of the day with marvelling visitors. The forgotten artists, through cubes of coloured glass overlaid with glass and set in other cubes of untarnishing gold, tell forth the triumph of the Christ, as he carries his own victorious cross in the lunette above the centre door. This tall resplendent cross is carried in the left arm of the risen, triumphant Saviour, as if it were his sceptre as he sits enthroned between his mother and Mark, with right hand uplifted to scatter the blessings of God down upon the people who come there at sunset, dazzled by the gold and azure glories of the Byzantine artists who executed these mosaics.

San Marco was begun during the early Middle Ages to enshrine the body of John Mark. But in addition to being his splendid sepulchre it is a monument to the maritime power of Venice, whose merchants and Crusaders carted home from the East all the columns, Byzantine marbles and bas-reliefs their cargo ships could carry—many of these being given in return for aid to the Byzantine emperor in his war against Moslems in Sicily. From the Ninth Century through the Eleventh, wealth was lavished on San Marco, which glorifies the symbol of the cross as no other church in Christendom to-day. Its Greek architects designed it in the form of an almost square Byzantine cross, whose centre and arms are topped by superb Byzantine domes which, seen from above in the balcony of the

Clock Tower, look as if made of crinkled bronze-green paper. Of the unique crosses on those plump Eastern domes we shall speak in Chapter Twelve. Nowhere can we find a church so full of crosses worked into its very fabric. In dark nooks on capitals of columns from vanished churches of Asia Minor, carved on walls, incised in marble work on facade and in the nave, set in undulating mosaics where people kneel in prayer on the damp floor—everywhere are crosses of Christ in this Basilica which John Ruskin calls "St. Mark's Rest." Oh, of course, there is plenty of Byzantine symbolism, as the bas-relief of twelve sheep flanked by palms of victory, like one we have lately seen in Istanbul, excavated from an earlier "Sancta Sophia." There are peacocks of immortality carved in the marble parapet of an upper gallery; the griffins, symbolic of persecutors; the cunning fox; the temperate donkey; the eagle, symbolic of the resurrection—all tucked into the dark corners of San Marco for our journey of discovery. But this fine imagery, says Ruskin, "leads always to the Cross, most conspicuous of all on the great rood . . . before the altar . . . against the shadow of the apse."

This impressive gilt crucifix of Latin type carries in its trefoil ends, the symbolic lion of St. Mark and an eagle denoting the resurrection of Jesus. It is unique in having fifteen wide-open fleurs-de-lis, springing from the terminations of the cross, and each fleur-de-lis concealing in its leaves three cones, symbolic of eternal life. On the reverse side of this high rood, as we saw when we went back into the choir, is a tall figure of Mark himself, as though martyred with his Lord, but with hands gracefully extended in a Gospel of entreaty.

When we went into the Treasury of San Marco we were impressed by several Byzantine silver reliquaries and book covers telling in enamel and precious stones the story of the

crucifixion. One of these, a Lorraine cross, surrounded by jewels, was brought west after the Fourth Crusade. Another, brought back by Henry of Flanders encases in precious metal what he supposed to be a part of the word of the "true cross" obtained in Constantinople. Another cross of venerable wood, encased in a later cross, bears messages in Greek affixed to its arms. It is identified as a cross of the Empress Irene, brought back to Venice by Crusaders from Constantinople in 1204. We thought of the inconsistencies of the wicked Irene, who, after sponsoring a return of image worship acted so cruelly to her son Constantine VI that he imprisoned her, only to be blinded after she had regained power and was ambitious of marrying the Frankish hero, Charlemagne, crowned Emperor at Rome on Christmas 800 A.D. What stories of human interest these old crosses all could tell!

"Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure,
By the cross are sanctified."

We are fortunate to have in our collection a small, handsomely carved silver replica of the Byzantine bronze chandelier hanging at the centre of San Marco's nave. Lane found it one day in a shop near the Basilica and we treasure it as a reminder of that unusual Eastern cross, intersected by another of similar design, which lights the way of worshippers walking in the Mediæval darkness of this church.

In San Marco we see the greatness of Venetian art before the Renaissance gave the world its Bellini, its Titian, its Tintoretto, whose masterpieces have afforded us memorable hours by their exhibition at the Pesaro Palace along the Grand Canal, testifying to the new breath of life and happiness and enthusiasm for a religion embodying a Renaissance freedom of spirit, unloosed from its Mediæval swaddling bands. The crude cryp-

tograms of the Catacombs were gone. Mediæval symbolisms also. Madonnas now were real mothers; the Child aglow with beauty and charm. The "Ecce Homo" of Guido Reni was a thorn-crowned Man, as well as a redeeming Lord.

"But your Italian collection includes no crosses from Rome?" you ask.

No, not from this capital of a world church, where crosses and rosaries go forth bearing the papal benediction to all the world. We have never bought crosses in Rome, except to give away to friends. We have preferred to carry away as our Roman types, Lane's pictures of the superb cross which tops the dome of St. Peter's four hundred and thirty-five feet above the Piazza; and, of the companion cross facing it in the same vast colonnaded square on top of the obelisk marking the traditional site of the martyrdom of Peter; the cross upheld by Christ, on the balcony over the pediment of St. Peter's; and the cross above the Mamertine Prison, where Paul, prisoner of the cross of Christ penned his last wonderful letter: "Christ Jesus . . . abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel."

Yes, and we have carried away in our memories, the modest cross on the Methodist Church standing by a Tiber bridge opposite the Castel San Angelo, with its invitation: "Free to all; preaching services at eleven and eight; Sunday School at ten."

Of course, many of the world's most valuable historic crosses and reliquaries are housed in the Treasury of St. Peter's or the Vatican Museum and shown only on special anniversaries. But we have seen in the open cases of the Vatican Museum, many ornate Latin crosses presented to various popes by admirers in many nations. I think we feel the most impressive cross in Rome is the one described in our chapter, "Crosses Against the Sky."

Italians of the Renaissance never forgot that they were Romans. Nor do those of the new Italy of our day. We have seen the Augustan grandeur again on her seven hills where "The Altar of Peace" and palaces long buried are coming to life as excavators dig for the new subway linking the Arch of Constantine with the 1942 Exposition grounds near Ostia. And where Mussolini's workmen raze acres of old dwellings to give a new perspective sweeping all the way from the Tiber to the giant cross on the dome of St. Peter's.

Most collectors of crosses turn to Florence for accessions, especially on the Ponte Vecchio with its silversmiths' shops which have sold crosses for centuries. But every time we come here and see a welter of designs from many lands, we feel a surfeit and buy none. We seem here to prefer the original art of the Cellini bust at the centre of the bridge looking along the Arno, as he sets us marvelling again at the inimitable Perseus of the master goldsmith of the Renaissance in the "Loggia," where the dripping, snaky locks of Medusa the Gorgon look as if the slender Perseus had but a moment ago severed her head with his brandished sword.

Friends have brought us crosses from Florence and these we appreciate, especially the one paved with ovals of old deep-blue Russian lapis lazuli. And from our favourite push-cart along the Arno near the Uffizi we have gotten a replica of a Byzantine "pictorial cross," bearing in six square panels of bas-relief on metal, scenes from the Passion Week.

Of Sicilian crosses we have three, all from lovely Taormina—a Seventeenth Century primitive silver crucifix; a gold Maltese, set with a stone of ruby red; and a square one of filigree having a flower at its centre.

Everywhere in the romantic city of Rhodes we meet the cross of this stronghold of Knights Hospitaller of St. John of

Jerusalem, who here settled after their ejection from Palestine, beautifying their palaces with superb Mediæval arches and details packed with feeling.

The moment your tender swings inside the little harbour where the Colossus of Rhodes was set up in 305 B.C., you will note beyond the twin pillars topped by the wolf of Rome and the antelope of Rhodes, a cross on the gable of the modern Cathedral of St. John. It is Maltese, for the Knights of Rhodes became the Knights of Malta. Its tapering arms are "anchored" and in each of the indented portions is a rose. For Rhodes is "The Island of Roses" and with them the native cross is trimmed. All through the city, now cleansed and beautified by its Italian masters, the cross appears. Even on sailboats in the harbour, on city gates, walls of public buildings, pillars, tombs, it appears.

But most effectively, on the Street of the Knights. Here the doors of the Grand Masters and knights of England and Spain and France are emblazoned with coats-of-arms embodying their favourite square cross. And inside the great Hospice of the Knights for sick pilgrims, the "martial monks" lavished the cross. For they made Rhodes a "bulwark of Christianity for the Levant." When they were not warring against Turk or corsair, they were building, healing, entertaining. There were three types in charge of the Hospice: warrior-knights, almoners, and serving-knights. Who carved the crosses, we do not know. But how they loom! In the charming lower cloister, whose round Crusader arches spring from square pillars to support a lovely stone vaulted ceiling; and in the spacious upper portico, reached by the most romantic flight of broad steps. The sick who were carried up here, first tested their returning strength in that upper gallery outside their cells. What rejoicing, when they were able to join the other patients, in the Large Refec-

tory—just such a room as Walter Scott would have delighted to use as a setting in a novel—very long for its slender width, its windows high up near a roof supported by seven round pillars, on each of whose capitals is carved a square cross.

If you are ever fortunate enough to ramble about the island of Rhodes as we have done time and again, your contact with its romantic landmarks of the Knights Hospitaller who here plied their works of mercy from 1309 to 1522 will send you on the trail of a Rhodian cross.

So when you find your Rhodian cross it will be a square cross, Maltese in type, and having at its centre a little antelope like the live one you saw in the moat by the city gate. And around the antelope, a crown of foliage, with the usual intersecting spearpoints transformed into four twigs of leaves "for the healing of the nations."

The era of the cross has not passed from Rhodes. Just recently on the isolated height of Fileremo, which was a worship centre as far back as Mycenæan and Hellenic times, a huge cross has been erected. The thousand-foot hill is its base. Its arms are forty-five feet wide. Inside is a circular staircase leading to the summit and offering a vista over sea and mountain which has through the ages been a favourite of Mediterranean man.

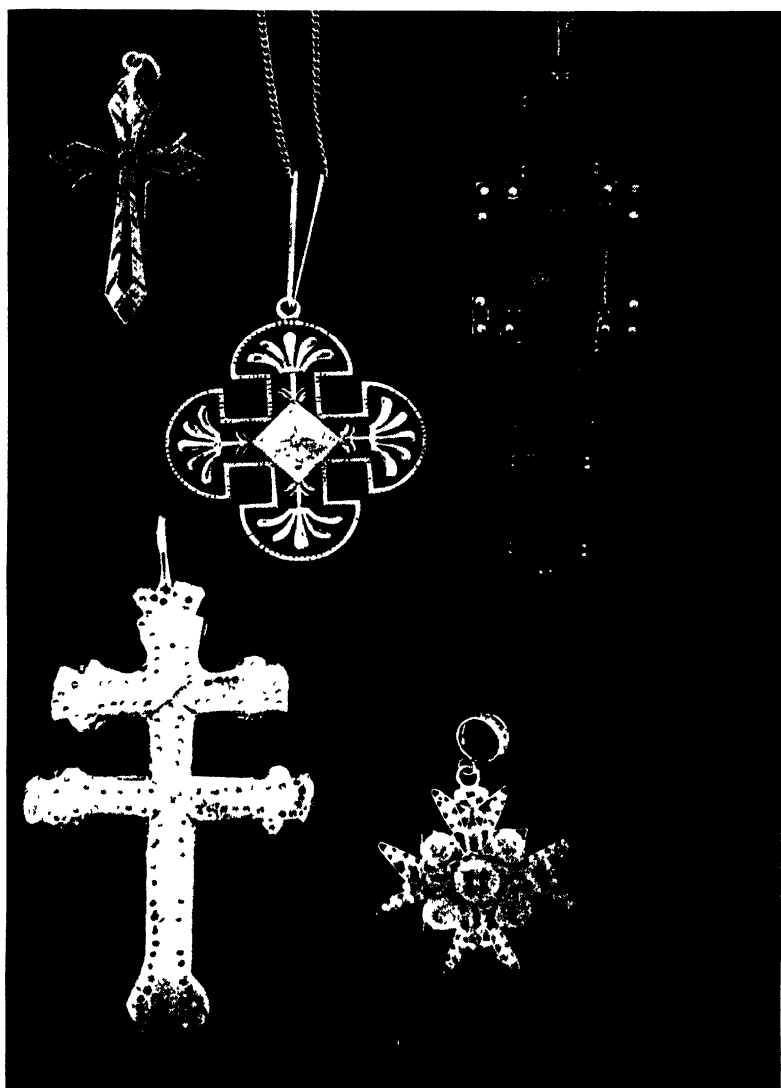
The acquiring of our Rhodian cross takes us into the heart of the heraldry popularized by the Knights Hospitaller of St. John of Jerusalem and the Knights Templar who went to free the Holy Places from entrenched Moslems.

Heraldry in Europe received its main impact from the Crusaders who, accustomed to advancing into battle against the Moslems with pennons flying, returned home and established some of the great houses extant to-day and gave them their cross-embazoned coats-of-arms. The first English king to have

arms on his shield was Richard I, in 1189. From the Thirteenth Century on, the popularity of shields increased and many of them were adorned with crosses, the most beautiful being the square cross crosslet, of which there were ten on the coat-of-arms of the Earl of Warwick. When knights in France and England rode out to the jousting tournaments, their cross-trimmed arms were gorgeous to behold. They had grown accustomed to the cross on their armour and their swords; or worn about their necks on heavy chains; stitched upon their flags and saddle clothes; and on their lances in cavalry attacks. They built their charming churches in Palestine with crosses for ground-plans, as at Emmaus. They became so "cross-minded" that they, like the civilians who thronged the "Pilgrim Roads" between Europe and Palestine, felt incomplete without a cross from the Land of the Cross, forgetting that Christ is a Spirit and needs no such symbol to assure his being "in the midst" of those who desire his presence to guide.

Not only are the chief decorations of European countries in the form of various "grand crosses," as the Cross of the Legion of Honour, the Star Cross of the Knight of the Garter, the Cross of St. Michael and St. George; but nations as well have incorporated the cross into their flags: Venezuela, Italy, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, Greece, Great Britain, whose Union Jack is a combination of three crosses, the St. Andrew's, the St. George, and another X-shaped cross for the Ireland of St. Patrick. Cities, too, have cross-emblazoned banners, as Genoa, Leghorn, Malta, Marseilles. It is not commonly known that the old flag of the American Colonies was a red banner with a red cross on a white chief. This was such an offense to New England Puritans that John Endicott cut the cross from the cloth in the presence of a great company of people and it

PLATE TEN



VARIOUS CROSSES LITHUANIAN, NORWEGIAN, SWISS,
AMERICAN INDIAN, MADEIRA

See text pages 146, 151, 165 and 169

continued to be used for a time over the protest of Cotton Mather and Governor Winthrop. No such dispute to-day over the forty-eight stars on their field of blue, nor over the cross as it appears in the Christian flag floating above the stars and stripes—the only one entitled so to do.

“Fling out the banner! let it float
 Skyward and seaward, high and wide:
Our glory only, in the cross;
 Our only hope, the Crucified!”

Chapter Eleven

NEW-WORLD CROSSES

"HAVE you any American crosses?" I was asked at the close of a lecture one afternoon. "I have one here which I should like to present to your collection."

And on the table where our specimens from old-world lands were lying, there was placed a white box. Opening it I found an accession about which I was enthusiastic.

"Where did you get this?" I asked the donor.

"It was made by an old seafaring man whose ship went down—and he with it. When the wreckage was sorted out on the rocks of Maine, his trunk was found and in the trunk, this cross."

It touched me profoundly. For at once I saw in it hours of worshipful handiwork expended by an old "Yankee salt" who, like many other sailors, was chronically out of reach of a church. From fragments of stray wood on his cargo ship he had fashioned a well-proportioned cross about six inches high, with its transverse bar, oblique. After painting it a delicate sea-green he had paved it skilfully with tiny seashells, of a variety of shapes—and at the centre he had cemented a little five-pointed starfish—placing Bethlehem thus at the heart of Calvary, as the designer of our elaborate gold Russian cross placed the star at the centre of his cross. The old sailor had wrought better than he knew, a symbolic hill of Golgotha from

a rounded, skull-like shell from which his cross rises. And near that lowest shell he had fastened bits of purple-red sea-moss, to indicate the redeeming blood of his Lord. Our whole collection has no more adequate or moving symbol than this, designed by the clumsy, salt-caked hands of a forgotten mariner whose yearning for worship worked itself out in executing this marine cross studded with frail crustaceans. The roar of the sea is in this cross. It speaks to us of the God who made heaven and earth, the sea and "all that in them is." And it speaks to us of the courageous men who sail for the benefit of humanity:

"They that go down to the sea in ships,
That do business in great waters;
These see the works of Jehovah,
And his wonders in the deep."

But a more truly marine cross is the microscopic unicellular animal known as the Radiolarian, or Marine Rhizopod, a one-celled protozoon living in the sea. Observed under the microscope of the zoologist this tiniest of creatures looks like an exquisite resurrection cross, with a many-rayed halo of glory completely surrounding it and a crown of thorns at its centre. This fine-art of the Creator speaks of the wonders He has hidden at the heart of His universe—in the form of crosses—whether in snowflakes or constellations or passion flowers or human tears. And like the cross, the Radiolaria *serve*. For their invisible shells sink to the bottom of the sea and form rock a thousand feet thick, in the form of a quartzite or flint.

It so happens that, in addition to the mariner's cross several other of our American specimens are of materials right out from the heart of nature. From a piece of coal dug in Pennsylvania mountains, a friend has just brought us a cross worked by an aged miner who for years, bowed himself to the task of

loosening pockets of this black diamond for the warmth of homes and the moving of the engines of industry. Despite the difficulty of working in so difficult a medium as coal, he achieved a stately little Latin cross and polished it so that it shines like jet. It is in highest contrast to the gleaming crystal cross of radiant white, described in Chapter Five.

Nature, again has made her contribution to our crosses from quarries in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia, whose twinned staurolite crystals appear in the form of clearly-discernible crosses, Maltese, Latin, and St. Andrew's. We at first were credulous about these having been made by the hand of nature, without much tampering by the chisel of man. But when we saw a piece of the matrix just as it had come out from under the earth with its paired crystals intersecting in the form of an X-shaped cross of Andrew, we were convinced that here again the cross has been built by the Creator into the very structure of His universe. This is beautifully exemplified by Colorado's mountain of the Holy Cross which carries in its snow-filled crannies a sparkling evidence of the beauty-loving personality of God. And in the stars of "The Southern Cross."

Even the violent torrential forces of nature have also contributed to our collection, for we have in our American group a cross made from one of the black keys of a church organ, destroyed during the 1936 Johnstown flood, in the church of which Lane was formerly pastor. The church secretary, dismayed at the wreckage she found upon opening the chancel door after the flood had abated, remembered the zeal with which he had laboured in that sanctuary and how sorry we would be for its destruction. Picking up one of the organ keys, she had it carved into a graceful ebony cross and sent it for our collection.

Nature has made us another American cross, one linked with

early Colonial history. It is of wood taken from Old St. John's Church at Richmond, Virginia, where in 1775, the young American patriot, Patrick Henry rose in a convention being held in this church to protest against the oppressive measures of the British to tax American Colonists. As we look at this quaint little wooden emblem among our treasures, we think of the words of the Christian orator spoken on that occasion: "Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty or give me death." A challenge, still, after two centuries, to oppressed minorities everywhere!

And nature's gift, too, is that small cross made from chips of Australian opal set in plastic wood by a Methodist clergyman whose hobby of conducting nature studies for groups of young people, led to his making opal crosses which he has scattered over the five continents in a fellowship of the cross, aimed to "combine the appreciation of nature with the central truth of our Christian faith," and expressing that appreciation in service gifts to a medical missionary in Liberia.

No group of American crosses would be complete without including an American Indian cross. One came into our collection in an unexpected way which illustrates how hobbyists become detectives, piecing together bits of apparently unrelated information. Following a lecture on "My Hobby of the Cross," a letter came enclosing a glossy print of three Indian crosses which had been dug up fifty years ago near the site of Fort Ouiatenon, that old block house redoubt "on the banks of the Wabash" near Lafayette, Indiana, which held forth in frontier forays between Indians, French, English traders and American Colonists, in the formative years of our country between 1722 and 1791. This old fort was erected near a group of vil-

lages forming the largest Indian settlement in the Middle West. It saw stormy scenes in those seventy critical years when our country was going through its birth throes. And was finally destroyed when General Washington, detecting a dominant English influence among the Indians, determined in 1790 to "make the Great Northwest safe for Americans."

But more than French traders or English soldiers or Colonial regiments we saw as we looked at that picture of the three Indian crosses. For we read in them a mark of the missionary efforts of the French Jesuits who for many years exercised great influence among the North American aborigines as they led them away from their worship of wooden idols and feather-trimmed gods, and the elements of nature, to a clearer knowledge of "The Great Spirit" whom all may worship "in spirit and in truth." These silver crosses probably belonged to and were buried with Jesuits near Fort Ouiatenon. Or they belonged to their Indian converts whose presence at this western Fort is attested by two baptismal records now housed in the cathedral at Vincennes, Indiana.

We filed the picture of those two-century-old silver Lorraine crosses, with their two parallel arms crudely incised with conventional dots. And hoped that some time an American Indian cross might somehow find its way into our collection. Our desire had unexpected fulfillment. Last Christmas a friend came into our home saying, "Yesterday I was looking about in a dusty little shop which has come into the light of day since the razing of the Sixth Avenue 'L'. I never noticed that shop before, but something led me in to see if its piles of 'junk' might yield some sort of cross not yet included in your collection. The merchant said he had just one or two crosses, and suggested that I buy this one. He knows nothing about it

—except that he secured it with a collection of Indian beads and trinkets.”

“*Indian trinkets?*” I exclaimed.

Opening the Christmas package, I found under its silver and blue wrappings what looked to be a counterpart of the Lorraine silver cross which had long lain pictured in our files. The chance circumstance that the merchant had mentioned gathering it up with Indian beads corroborated its identity. Its crude, hand-cut delineation of the old French design, its omission of all ornamentation but the border of dots drilled with a sharp instrument, showed us how some Indian had probably attempted to copy what his teacher had used—excavated from his burial place among the tribes of long ago. This cross is a reproach and a challenge to continue the evangelization of those noble tribes who roamed our plains and mountains before the aggressions of the white men pushed them into allotted reservations. Yet on these reservations Navajo children are being taught by Methodist deaconesses to continue their ancestral handicraft, not only the weaving of rugs but the carving of crosses studded with turquoise.

Our American crosses include also what is called a “depression cross”—there were plenty of depression crosses scattered throughout America after 1929. This one was found by a Bible pupil one winter morning when, too poor to pay carfare to the Church, she and her husband and three children were trudging along on foot through the snow and found this little cross lying on the pavement. Another American cross we call our “benediction cross,” because on its plain old silver face there is carved the Old Testament word of blessing, “Mizpah,” well loved by the gentlewoman whose husband found it among her personal effects and presented it to her pastor as a symbol of the devoted work of her hands for the women of her church

group whose meetings always adjourned with the Mizpah benediction. And then there is that almost invisible cross, brought one day by a very humble friend ambitious of contributing the "smallest of all" to our collection. And she did. It measures one quarter of an inch. And there is one brought by another friend, which she asked us to call our cross from "Where cross the crowded ways of life" because she had bought it at that crossroads of Manhattan, Fifth Avenue and Forty-Second Street.

America is included by our Riverside cross, brought by one of the dearest old Christian friends these collectors have ever had, one whose youthful spirit at eighty entered into our hobby zest. For when she was enjoying the famous display of crosses at the Mission Inn at Riverside, California, she bought for us this well-fashioned ebony crucifix, bearing its crown of triumph.

North America has added a Celtic cross from the Canadian Fair at Toronto. And another modernistic one, in wood, from the Temple of Religion at the 1934 "Century of Progress Exposition" in Chicago. And two much treasured-ones from the New York World's Fair of 1939. The latter are eloquent of the *crucial* experiences through which the nations which made these crosses were passing at the very hour when these were bought for our collection. Baltic boundary lines were as fluid as water. The crucifying fear of national martyrdom was being faced by the brave little Republic of Lithuania—despite the offer of Vilna—just at the hour in October 1939 when Lane and I were in her pavilion at the World's Fair. While talking to a splendid young Lithuanian attaché about the equivocal summons of one Baltic country after another to Moscow to discuss protective "treaties of mutual aid," Lane noticed something in the cases of peasant art which he called me to see—a small cross

of "Baltic gold," amber washed up on the shores of this brave little republic which enjoyed twenty-one years of happy independence, with her own parliament and council of ministers. Lane was happy to add this simple amber cross, whose terminations and etched design are an interesting departure from the plain Latin cross. For although Lithuania is a Roman Catholic country, its art is related to that of Russia and certain strains in Baltic peasant patterns. This cross seems a bit of "history in the making," carrying us to the happy regime of a republic in which were no extremes of wealth or poverty, little unemployment, no budget deficit—a small land of two million inhabitants who before the World War constituted one of the more cultured sections of the old Russian Empire, neither Slav nor Germanic, but of a distinct branch of the Aryan family whose rich, ancient language, akin to the difficult Sanskrit, is capable of deep emotional expression.

Lithuania together with Latvia, Estonia and Finland, constituted the four Baltic provinces which were separated from the Old Russian Empire and granted independence after the Bolshevik revolution. These four little neighbours were among the twenty-one states carved out when the "new map of Europe" was made at Versailles. The treasures of their own art and industry exhibited at the New York World's Fair in 1939 were a demonstration of the use to which this ambitious people put their freedom. Their hand-loomed textiles are gorgeous.

While admiring the "Northern Gold" crosses from which we selected our own, our eyes fell upon the unusual display of miniature wayside crosses hand-carved from wood by Lithuanian peasants on their long northern winter evenings when toil in the fields was impossible. While their wives and daughters were weaving warm woollen garments and colourful

decorative textiles for wall coverings, beds and rugs, these sturdy men of living religious faith who were accustomed to erecting wooden prayer-places at the intersection of their roads, in the midst of their farms, or in the yards of their quaint old churches, wrought out these charming models and sent them across the seas, to tell their many Lithuanian brothers living in the new world that the old fires of religion still burned in the Baltic homeland; and that they declined to be discouraged by the annexation of their Baltic port of Klaipeda-Memel to Germany in March of 1939, or even by the tragic fate of their old integral ally, Poland, which in the Sixteenth Century formed with Lithuania, a commonwealth where the Duke of Lithuania was always elected King of Poland.

One of these miniature wayside crosses from Lithuania rests upon a crescent moon. A well-informed young Lithuanian woman at once explained this use of the moon under the cross thus: before the complete conversion of Lithuania to Christianity many people still worshipped the moon, sun and stars revered by northern peoples. Hence a little concession to the old pagan was made and the moon, carried into their Christian symbolism. Or, since the cross rests on the top of the crescent moon, it may denote the sovereignty of Christ's power over the forces of nature. For it also appears on our old Spanish Caravaca cross. The crescent moon has a different symbolism when used under the Russian cross. On one Lithuanian wayside cross, too, are carved, as we have seen on rustic crosses in the Italian island of Ischia and in rural sections of French Canada, all the instruments of the crucifixion, the ladder by which Christ ascended the cross, the spear, nails, sponge, crown of thorns and the cock of Peter's betrayal.

Another of our Baltic crosses is a Norwegian one, from the New York World's Fair Pavilion of this other diligent, peace-

loving Baltic land of shadowy fjords. It is of a distinctive square type with gracefully rounded ends, each of which bears on its fine black enamel on silver, a fan of conventionalized palm leaf. At its centre is a square of sea-blue enamel to which another square cross in gold is applied—a very “Protestant-looking” cross of fine craftsmanship for which Norwegian silversmiths are known.

We have another “neutral” cross in the form of a deep-rose carnelian one studded with marcasite, from the mountains of Switzerland, a stately reminder of the Sixteenth Century Swiss iconoclasm of Zwingli and Calvin who reacted so violently against “images” in the Roman Catholic churches of this admirable little country. It makes us think of our observations in the Cathedral at Bern, while waiting for a ship to take us out of the crisis of late August 1939. We noticed that the crosses and symbolism had been removed when the Reformation transformed this stately structure into a Protestant church and turned the pews away from the altar to face the pulpit, glorifying the sermon rather than the mass.

And neighbour to our “Swiss Protestant” cross are two Bavarian crosses from over the Alps at Oberammergau. The cedar crucifix was carved by a village peasant just beginning the art which has made his ancestors famous. The other in silver was designed to commemorate the three hundredth performance of the Oberammergau enactment of the crucifixion of Christ. It carries at its centre the dates: 1634-1934—both full of significance for this pious Bavarian village so troubled by the plague of shifting political power in which they are far less interested than in the peaceful pursuit of their carvings and their holy drama in the heart of the Bavarian Alps.

American crosses, you say, should include some from Latin America. True. We have them represented by their Spanish

and Portuguese originals from which our good neighbour republics designed their own—lavishly encrusting many of them with inappropriately costly jewels. Little wonder that these have been sold to pools of jewellers and melted down for other purposes. Far more meaningful, perhaps, is the tremendous but simple cross of the “Christ of the Andes,” fitting symbol of the Prince of Peace. This statue of Christ bearing his cross is on the highest peak of the Andes on the border between Argentina and Chile.

Canadian American crosses have somewhat baffled us. In Quebec, so full of artistic vestiges of the old French colonial days, we came off defeated. Modern crosses made no appeal, either at Sainte Anne de Beaupré or at Montreal.

The Canadian cross we remember most vividly is the one at Grand Pré in Nova Scotia. There, near the site of the little French country chapel where “Longfellow’s Evangeline” and her French Norman townfolk worshipped before their deportation by the English in 1755 after the harvests had been gathered in is a stout peasant cross made of stones picked out from the ruined farm houses of this industrious people who had made their “great meadows” yield so generously of cattle and grain that they became a matter of envy to the British who brought in their own settlers to replace their French rivals. On the site from which the broken-hearted group in their twelve transports were launched into unknown destinies, another cross of simple metal has been erected—a French cross with trefoil ends, its circle of immortality pierced by four spears. And on the new chapel which replaces the one the Acadians knew, is a slender spire topped by a distinctive French Norman cross. The Grand Pré crosses are symbolic of that host of transferred populations seen in many parts of the world in our own century—in Turkey, Greece, and Central Europe.

Chapter Twelve

THE CROSS AGAINST THE SKY

SOMEWHERE between the green olive groves of Gethsemane and the ivory-coloured walls of First Century Jerusalem there stood a cross against the sky. A stark cross of unplanned wood, a Roman cross against a leaden sky. And on that cross a Man was dying—dying to save a world that did not want to be saved. Words spoken in derision by soldiers of Cæsar were literally true; “He saved others; himself he cannot save.” He was the Christ. He could not come down until it was “finished.”

And yet he did come down. And mingles to-day with all who will grant him the courtesy of their company. His empty cross is the only hope of a crucified world. And of its bewildered people. It is to them that the Living Christ is speaking in Stanley Todd's great painting, “Immortality.” This majestic portrayal shows what we might call a Modern-Byzantine Christ, a living personality of robust beauty coming forth in strength, leaving the discarded shell of his crucified body still hanging on the cross behind him as he moves out into a new day with hand extended in invitation, challenged by the modern skyline emerging from that of old Jerusalem.

Ever since that frightfully glorious hour of Good Friday, “the sun's light failing,” as Luke puts it, in a land where the sun is particularly strong and life-giving, nations have flung their crosses boldly against native skies, remembering Calvary.

From the Fourth Century on, when in Jerusalem itself Constantine lifted up the first cross of his Christian Empire, these have loomed in settings poignantly dramatic. In the City of the Cross, where Christian Street meets the head of the Via Dolorosa at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the cross rises from the dome of the church built above the site of Calvary outside the Herodian walls. Here was Golgotha, probably, and the tomb of Jesus, where Queen Helena, mother of Constantine, believed she had found (326 A.D.) the "True Cross." Be this as it may, the low rocky summit of this Calvary with a storm-riven gash in its side is housed under a structure which for sixteen centuries has been faith's goal for those who thronged "The Pilgrim Roads" from Europe or imaginatively reached it by way of their own Via Dolorosa.

Crosses against the sky! People against the sky! And each having much to do with the other. Nowhere have we seen crosses of Christendom looming with greater challenge than on the five Byzantine domes which top the cruciform Basilica of San Marco in Venice. They are the high point of Europe's most elegant Piazza. They are square crosses, or pairs of square crosses, intersecting each other at right angles, and each having its four arms terminating in sprays of three balls, making an apostolic twelve for each cross.

And in among the crosses on their crinkly domes there is a company of people carved against the sky—amazing people who spring from the mosaics of the Triumphant Christ in the lunette below. He has become "the sure foundation" for these skytop people, these horizon folks, who claim with vigor, "Because he lives, I, too, shall live." For centuries they have literally been looked up to by throngs of admiring travellers milling about in San Marco Square below, feeding pigeons, sipping

ices, meeting friends, listening to strains of delicate string music.

And who are these pinnacled people against the sky? Mystics, scholars, saints of their own romantic age, and John Mark himself given the honour place, topping the central gable with his symbols of Winged Lion and open Book, looking down on the four famous bronze horses which have captivated men from Nero to Napoleon. The words inscribed on his Gospel page give us pause to-day: "*Pax tibi, Marce, Evangeliste meus.*"

The canopied pinnacles house the Evangelists, Gabriel and Mary. Supplementing these, on the north facade, is a company of prophets, saints, angels. The north gables lift up figures symbolizing the Virtues—Hope, Temperance, Faith, Prudence, Charity. And from the north pinnacles loom the personalities of Church Fathers, Gregory, Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome. All seem as if about to step off into the cloudless Venetian sky—or to melt into it and become no more.

"Love's redeeming work is done,
Fought the fight, the battle won.
Soar they now where Christ has led,
Following his exalted head.
Made like him, like him, they rise,
Theirs the cross, the grave, the skies."

There is a virile glory about the bold stand of these people against the sky which expresses the aggressive faith of the Middle Age when Byzantine Christianity went forth to conquer. There was a courage to the up-thrust out-reach of those "dark" centuries, a nobility which has counterparts in society to-day.

Look at that splendid captain who stands on his bridge, silhouetted against the Italian blue. Every time his vessel cruises along a certain strip of Riviera he has its whistle blow three

salutes. One for his wife and children as he passes his own villa, longing to share with them its cool beauties. Another for his mother who lives a bit farther down the coast. And another as he passes the lighthouse, in remembrance of the old keeper of the light who influenced his early life. A great habit this, *saluting the fundamental values of life.*

Too, against the skyline of our nearer horizon I see that overworked young physician, who halts his car at his church to observe the Holy Communion, in between calls upon the very sick, that he may gain inner resources of spirit to heal and to fortify the weak. And there is that noble negro pianist, who, after a brilliant recital of songs which by an error in the program had been indicated as her own compositions, had the courage to stand up in the midst of applause and tell her audience that she had not created, but only interpreted, the great themes. It would have been so easy to "get away" with the ovation. People against the sky? How about that retired minister who, called in to fill a pulpit engagement due to the illness of a pastor, received from him a check and returned it saying, "I need the money, but I never have and never will take profit from the misfortune of a brother minister"?

Skyline people. Rooftop people. People against the sky! They are all about us, if we lift our eyes to look. People who, like those little figures atop San Marco, carry their victorious pennons. For example, that young singer whose name would be familiar to many of you, were I to mention it. One day when walking along a city street she was pondering the challenge of surrendering her hard-won professional prestige to devote herself to Christian service. Just as she was halting at a corner she saw on the pavement a silver cross. As she picked it up there flashed through her mind these words she had frequently sung in sacred concerts. They meant something very real to her now:

PLATE ELEVEN



CROSSES AGAINST THE SKY SAN MARCO, VENICE THE MARTYR'S
CROSS, COLOSSUM, ROME, SKYTOP CROSSES, YALTA, CRIMEA

See text, pages 174, 177 and 179

"O cross that liftest up my head,
I dare not ask to fly from thee;
I lay in dust life's glory dead
And from the ground there blossoms red
Life that shall endless be."

And there is that brave widow who, seeing her new church rising against the sky, presented at personal sacrifice an exquisite Jerusalem cross to crown its gable, transmuting her own sorrow into inspiration for "those that pass by."

Hosts of rooftop people are doing nothing more spectacular than keeping silent about their own woes, sharing thus in the quiet far-reaching redemptive plan of the Galilean who, as John says, "went out, bearing the cross for himself." It was for just such unsung people against the sky that Christ burst the gates of Good Friday's tomb. He could not be holden of death.

"Sing with all the sons of glory,
Sing the resurrection song!
Death and sorrow, earth's dark story,
To the former days belong:
All around the clouds are breaking,
Soon the storms of time shall cease,
In God's likeness, man awaking,
Knows the everlasting peace."

But how about other crosses against the skylines of nations? Walking one day through the back streets of a town in southern Russia, we saw a hillside church lifting from its domes, several perfect types of Russian cross. Of course, there was the double transverse bar. And the oblique one below and the intersecting rays of sunlit immortality. But there were also chains dangling from the crosses—symbolic of the emprisonment of Christ. And the crosses rose from slender crescent moons looking almost like anchors. Those crescents when so used always

speak the Byzantine origin of the Russian church. Eastern artists remembered always that on the night when old Byzantium on the Golden Horn was being attacked by Philip of Macedon, its citizens were aided to escape by the light of a crescent moon. Grateful for delivery they erected a statue of the huntress Diana, and used her symbol, the slender moon. When Moslem Turks captured Byzantium in the Fifteenth Century they took over this badge of old Constantinople. With a star added, the crescent still flies on the flag of the Republic of Turkey and with three stars, on the flag of Egypt. When it appears with a star above it, as on our little Turkish Christian cross from Istanbul, it implies the victory of Christ over the crescent of Islam.

Seldom have we seen a native cross loom more impressively than in the little town of Lindos, on the island of Rhodes. It stands atop a striking white tower with several balconies in gleaming contrast to the glowering black masonry of the ancient acropolis occupied by Phœnicians in 1000 B.C.—acropolis of native rock from which have been extracted eloquent relics of the Mycenæan civilization which preceded the "Golden Age" of Greece. This delicately-ornate square cross at Lindos has the more to say to the winds of Rhodes, because it rises near the place where Christ's apostle, Paul, touched the island on his way from Ephesus to Tyre.

And we have seen, between the granite Rock at Gibraltar and the low isthmus connecting it with Spain, a tall white cross against a neutral sky—a cross memorializing men who died in the World War. And on that cross emblazoned is a long sword, Crusader like. This cross against "Neutral Ground" typifies the tensions not only of soldiers but of civilians at Gibraltar in years of adjacent civil war and Mediterranean crisis. It is companion to all those other white war crosses, row

on row in fields of Flanders or on Beersheba Desert or on Galipoli Peninsula or at Arlington on the Potomac.

And have you ever seen rising boldly against the Roman sky in the Colosseum, that giant cross which consecrates the arena where Christian martyrs died? It makes a shrine of this play-place of pagan emperors.

Against the clear Judean sky we have seen crosses at Bethlehem, City of the Star. The largest of these stands on the roof of the Franciscan portion of the Church of the Nativity, with the flat-roofed stone homes of Bethlehemites, their schools, churches, olive-clad terraces all spread out below the cross and dominated by its noble arms, which extend over the captivating scene as if in benediction. Over beyond lies the Field of the Shepherds, all compassed within the outspread arms of the Cross of Bethlehem. No man coming into the world, not even the Child of Bethlehem, escapes the cross. "Heaven lies about us in our infancy," just as really as the star-studded Bethlehem beauty surrounded the manger-cradle of Jesus. But Jerusalem is never farther from Bethlehem than five miles. The star of Bethlehem and the cross of Calvary became one blended symbol after the storm-rent Friday of the world's first Holy Week. So close are star and cross at Bethlehem that the symbol on top of the Armenian portion of the Basilica of the Nativity has its arms terminated in stars. And on many a Bethlehem home there is painted a white cross above the tan stone door, a square cross if the occupants are Greek Catholics, a Latin if they worship with the western Church. The interior of the Church over the manger where Christ was born has an ornate and stately cross on its rood screen which dominates the interior of this favorite sanctuary whose ancient monolithic columns have crosses in their capitals. Crosses, too, are carved on the colonettes and in the fine grille doors erected by Crusaders as en-

trance to the Grotto of the Nativity under the choir of the Church.

"A candle is a lovely thing
To light for Him tonight,
A slim white candle, straight and tall,
To make the darkness bright.

But flickering out upon a Cross
Upon a darkened hill,
It lit again—upon the Cross
And it is burning still."

Anon.

We have seen crosses looming against the sky at home in America, too. Have you ever driven across Brooklyn Bridge at twilight, when lights begin to gleam from a thousand windows in the canyons of Manhattan? And have you ever seen at that hour on the waterfront below the skyscrapers the cross on the Seamen's Church Institute, lighted in invitation to mariners who have lost their way? Down the harbour, under the bridges, looms the torch of the statue of Liberty. But this lamp of a nation is less impressive than the lighted cross which soars "skyward and seaward." This beacon proclaims the actual *doing* of the work Christ went to his cross to accomplish. *He, if he be lifted up against our modern skies will still draw men unto him.* He finds us out when we are least expecting him.

And have you noticed the loom of St. Patrick's Cathedral cross on Fifth Avenue, seen in amazing beauty of perspective across the gardens of Rockefeller Plaza? On the gable between grey spires that soar into the sky above sidewalks solid with well-dressed people, this cross helps keep religion on "The Avenue."

And have you seen against Chicago's skyline within the notorious "Loop," the world's highest cross—higher even than St.

Peter's at Rome or the crosses on Cologne's Cathedral? It tops the slender spire of the skyscraper Methodist Church, the Chicago Temple.

A CROSS AT DUSK

"High o'er the city's murk and mist,
Golden with sunset's flame,
The great cross lifts against the dark,
The glory of His name.

Alone prophetic of the Love
That change can never mar
The cross above the city gleams—
Faith's high and holy star!"

(Arthur Wallace Peach.)

Or perhaps you like to think of the cross against the sky as you saw it reflected during an Eastern dawn service on Mirror Lake in the Yosemite. Or topping the gable of that little log chapel at Jackson's Hole, Montana, against a snowy background of the Giant Teton Rockies?

It has been natural that our study of the crosses of Christendom should be reflected in the Brooklyn church of which Lane is pastor. On cornerstone, doors and altar of this modern worship centre at the heart of the city, and in the chancel floor, the Jerusalem cross, our favourite, has been worked out in stone, brass, marble, nailheads—yes, and in olive wood from Jerusalem, in our little Children's Chapel. But a cross not planned by the architect fills a unique function also.

One Christmas, I gave the "Padre" an electric banjo clock for his study on the second floor of the Church. It looked well, beside the architect's drawing of the chancel, above the open fireplace with its andirons of little Mediæval monks' heads. But one day a thief found his way into that secluded room and made off with the banjo clock, leaving three ugly nailholes

scarring the new cream wall. More unfortunate than the loss of the gift, was the mark of those hideous nail prints. Noticing them one morning especially as he was blocking out his Easter sermons, Lane's eye fell on an old Greek cross from Jerusalem, hanging on the opposite wall. It had been given him one time when we were in the City of the Cross by a friend who had secured it from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre during a renovation. The crude wood of the three transverse bars of this Orthodox cross was overlaid with faded rose cloth to which flakes of gold and rows of "pearls" had been applied.

"Here is an idea!" he thought. "I'll place the old cross from Jerusalem over the marks of the thief!"

And as he hung it where the clock had been he thought of how the nailprints of the thief on Calvary had been covered by those of the Saviour hanging at his side. Of course his Easter sermon was born then and there.

Protestants have swung too far away from the use of religious symbols. They are on their way back, however, at this very hour, in their return to the chancel and altar cross. And they admit their need of something in their homes to remind them of the Christ in whose sanctuary they worship. We agree with Sartell Prentice who, in a closing page of his the "Voices of the Cathedral," challenges us again to build the splendour of the Church whose old and faithful servant, Christian art, was destroyed by the Renaissance and interred by the Reformation.

Time and again we remove the trays of English, French, Coptic, Byzantine or Russian crosses from their cabinet and think of the far-off places where we found them, or of the friends who have given them. Visitors ask to see the collection and are inspired by their loveliness. Yet in themselves these crosses are all just bits of silver or gold or wood or brass or bronze of no value in themselves unless we see in them sym-

bolts of that supremely beautiful resurrection which took place in a Jerusalem garden nineteen centuries ago.

"They are but broken lights of Thee,
And thou, O Christ, art more than they."

The real cross of Christ in which we glory, "towering o'er the wrecks of time" measured in dynasties of men who have ruled and vanished, is the one whose radiance flashes out from *lives* that are emulating the drama of Easter morning. Their metal has been purified in the fining-pot of an experience like Christ's; adorned with jewels of grace; and set in perfect filigree of finely-wrought character. They have discovered, with the poet Markham, that we seldom ever choose the better part, until we set a cross up in the heart.

In our Foreword I told you that if you would stand by our narrative until its last chapter, we would justify our title. And here is that justification. Christ's greatest apostle, Paul, also had a hobby. And his was the same as mine, the *hobby of the cross*. For a hobby is just that which thrusts itself most prominently into our consciousness. And with Paul this was an all-consuming interest in the cross. He came to it by a never-forgotten experience. For in his message on Mars Hill, Athens, when he matched all his brilliant intellect against the best Athenian minds in the shadow of their own temple-crowned Acropolis, he had failed to mention anything at all about the cross of Christ, the very centre of his personal belief. So, as he was trudging along the dusty Sacred Way between Athens and Corinth with a sense of defeat, he came to a resolution which he revealed later in a letter to the friends he had made at Corinth during that sojourn.

"I, brethren, when I came unto you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming the testimony of God. For

I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."

Paul's one obsession was the cross. So much so that friends thought he had lost his balance. The cross seemed to them "foolishness." To which Paul's answer was ready: "But to us who are saved, it is the power of God." He had learned by a bitter failure to make the cross the pivot of his life.

The new creature that was Paul, bore branded on his body the "marks of Jesus," stigmata of his identity as a Christian dynamist, energizing the world of his day with beneficent power. If tent-cloth weaving was his craft and Christian labor his hobby, the two became merged into one consuming interest, so that he cried out with influential conviction, "Far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world hath been crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

We live in a world of realism. Wars and rumors of wars make us at times too disturbed to think in terms of beauty or of symbolism—much less, in terms of the mystical. We yearn for a dawn of an overwhelmingly lovely tomorrow when sturdy dreamers will again build from the stuff of the Spirit, a beauty of substance by which the citizens of tomorrow will read our soul as readily as we scan the yesterdays of Athens, Ravenna, Rome, Jerusalem and Alexandria from their symbols in stone and bronze and cheery mosaic.

"His cross is lifted o'er us,
We journey in its light.
The crown awaits the conquest;
Lead on, O God of might."

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